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A Linguistic Approach to the 'Language Question' in Greece¹

G. BABINIOTIS

I FROM ATTICISM TO MODERN GREEK KOINE: A HISTORICAL SURVEY

In 1975, one year after the restoration of democracy in Greece, the government made a historic decision regarding the Greek language: Modern Greek – by which I mean the simple, everyday language as it is spoken today by all Greeks who have enjoyed an elementary school education – was adopted as the official language of the state. With this decision we embarked on the definitive solution of one of the longest standing controversies of modern hellenism: the language problem, which has tormented the Greeks for centuries.

Phases of the language problem. Forms of Modern Greek

(a) Atticism

The Greek language problem emerged a very long time ago, around the first century B.C., as a result of the well-known movement called Atticism.

The undoubted decline of intellectual creativity during this period (a decline which, as is well known, was the result of political, social, cultural and psychological factors) was

1. This is the text of a talk given before a joint session of the American Philological Association and the Modern Greek Studies Association in December 1977.

erroneously attributed by contemporary scholars to the dominance of the Alexandrian koine, which in fact represented the natural development of classical Greek. 'Return to classical Greek' was the slogan adopted by these scholars. Their specific aim was the renaissance of Greece and the improvement of its intellectual level through the cultivation of the classical language. We know from history that the preaching of those intellectuals did not aim at a true rebirth of the ideals of classical hellenism (something which the Romans, by contrast, did achieve, in a different but none the less profoundly creative manner) but at a naïve, formalistic, outward imitation of the language of classical Greece.

The result of this movement was the splitting of an as-yet-still-unified Greek language into two forms:

(i) the written language, which imitated, with many mistakes, shortcomings and exaggerations, the classical language of the fifth century B.C., and

(ii) the spoken language, or the Alexandrian koine, a developed, simplified form of classical Greek that already possessed the structural features of Modern Greek.

This was the origin of the schism within the Greek language – the schism of which we are the heirs. Throughout its history, Byzantium was harassed by this linguistic split, and indeed it was not until the eleventh century that literary texts began to be composed in the simpler oral language, later to be known as demotic (the Greek term is *δημώδης* or *δημοτική*) in contrast with the atticizing learned written speech, out of which grew the purist style or *katharevousa* (Greek terms: *λόγια* or *καθαρεύουσα*).

(b) Modern Greek period

After a long period of Turkish domination, a free Greek state was at last established about 1830. Hellenism began to reconstruct itself, as it were, out of chaos, and among its first worries was, of course, the determination of the official state language. The language problem now became acute. If we are to re-evaluate this problem, I would suggest the following classification of the historical stages through which the controversy has passed so far:

- (i) archaism / 'neoatticism'
- (ii) purism
- (iii) Psycharism / 'old demoticism' (*παλαιοδημοτικισμός*)
- (iv) 'puristicism' (*καθαρευουσιανισμός*)
- (v) demoticism
- (vi) Modern Greek koine

(i) Archaism / 'neoatticism'

Here we are dealing with a romantic movement. Like Atticism itself, from which of course it takes its name, neoatticism maintains that the political revival of the Greek nation ought to be followed by a cultural renaissance which in turn should be based on a reborn language. Thus one should avoid the 'adulterated' language (adulterated, that is, mainly by Turkish words), the 'decadent' language of slavery, the 'inferior' language (debased during the Middle Ages), the 'vulgar' language of the uneducated Greeks who lived under the Turkish yoke – in a word, the oral demotic speech. Leaving this language behind us, then, we should according to the neoatticists, return to the genuine ancestral language of the Greeks, i.e. to ancient Greek. But this ideal was clearly impractical; a more realistic solution had to be adopted, namely the use of an archaic language closely related to, but not identical with, ancient Greek. Thus, among other things, there would be linguistic proof of the continuity of hellenism and of the 'Greekness' of the Greeks, concepts that had been challenged by Fallmerayer. The inspirers and expounders of this movement were P. Kodrikas and the famous 'teachers of the race' Voulgaris, Doukas, Economos, Commitas and others – as well as many of the Phanariots, among whom S. Byzantios and P. Soutsos deserve mention.

(ii) Purism

Purism (*καθαρισμός*) started as a progressive movement, based on a compromise: it was both a reaction to archaism and an early step in the direction of the language as it was actually spoken. It was the first conscious attempt to simplify the official language, and benefited from the prestigious support of a man of rare intellectual gifts, Adamantios Korais (1748–1833). Both the name and the essential character of this movement derive

from Korais' insistence on the need for a purification (*καθαρισμός*) of the language, in other words the rejection of loanwords (mainly Turkish) and the substitution for them of Greek words, either ancient ones or neologisms coined on a learned model. The beneficial result of Korais' preaching – which was to be continued later by puristicism – was that the huge number of Turkish and other loanwords decreased amazingly, especially in the written language, a fact that helped to create the relatively homogeneous character of Modern Greek as regards vocabulary and phonology. But the exaggerated and arbitrary application of this principle also had an opposite effect: the attempt to remove and replace genuine demotic words, i.e. to extend the practice of purging to Greek words of popular usage.

In short, by condemning linguistic archaism and advocating the meeting of the archaic and popular linguistic traditions half way, as he used to say, Korais helped to blunt prejudices against the spoken language. Seen from this point of view, his achievement lies in his having paved the way for the recognition of demoticism.

(iii) Psycharism / 'old demoticism'

Old demoticism was a progressive movement whose roots lay in the Ionian School (whose main representative was the poet Solomos) and in the writings of Katartzis, Vilaras and Christopoulos, all of whom were born in the eighteenth century and flourished before the Greek War of Independence. But its scholarly foundations were established entirely by Yannis Psycharis, a Greek professor of linguistics at the School of Oriental Studies in Paris at the end of the nineteenth century.

Now, for the first time, the right of spoken Greek to become the official state language received scholarly recognition. Of course, the demotic of Psycharis' period was a wider linguistic form based on the Peloponnesian koine and influenced by the island dialects, especially the ones spoken in the Ionian group and in Crete.

Unfortunately, the erroneous and (by today's standards) linguistically inadmissible view that language can be subjected to certain general rules imposed by the linguist led Psycharis to coin 'manufactured', non-existent, analogical forms, known

today as his 'linguistic extremes' or even as 'psycharisms'. These brought Psycharis' movement into partial disrepute, debasing its significance. Consider, for example:

περκεφαλιά (instead of *περικεφαλαία* 'helmet') after *καρδιά*,
μηλιά
κλασσικάδα (*κλασσικότης*) after *φρεσκάδα*, *λιακάδα*
περιεχάμενος after *λεγάμενος*
παρούμενα after *μελλούμενα*
 even *μέλλο* and *φωνήεντο* after *δέντρο*, *νερό* (instead of *μέλλον*,
-οντος and *φωνήεν*, *-εντος*).

Despite all this, Psycharis' work was the first important scholarly attempt to elevate the spoken language to official status; his contribution to the solution of the language problem was truly decisive.

(iv) Puristicism

Factors leading to the formation of a type of a learned language that came nearer the spoken language were: the teachings of Korais, the general tendency towards avoiding any archaic linguistic extreme, and indeed linguistic reality itself. Taken together, these factors created an impetus that led by stages to the formation of the so-called 'simple katharevousa' (*άπλη καθαρρεύουσα*). This linguistic form acquired great strength especially from its legal adoption, through the Greek Constitution of 1911, as the official language of the nation, taught at school, and used by administration, the academic world and the press.

Psycharism, with its linguistically extreme views, had created the need for a more exact definition of the limits of katharevousa, and for a more progressive evolution of its elements, so that they might come closer to the oral language. The result was simple katharevousa.

Having constituted for many years the main instrument of written expression, and, for a limited number of Greeks, of the spoken language too, simple katharevousa has been systematically cultivated and renewed, so that it has developed into a linguistic instrument of high communicative power,

especially in the field of scholarship. Nevertheless, despite its great cultivation and refinement, katharevousa could never have been generally conceived as the official Greek language of the future, as it has never been satisfactorily used to meet the vital needs of everyday communication.

The main spokesman for katharevousa and for the rights of the learned tradition was G. Hatzidakis, who was at the same time the founder *par excellence* of scholarly research in the demotic language.

(v) Demoticism

The moderate linguistic teachings of Manolis Triantafyllidis greatly reduced the provocative extremes of Psycharis' old demoticism, thus facilitating the transition to a more acceptable form of demotic. With great respect towards the tradition of Psycharis, but also with considerable sensitivity and realism about the linguistic situation that prevailed in his day, Triantafyllidis tried, as leader of a group of moderate demoticists, to consolidate a milder form of demotic that would be acceptable to a larger percentage of Greeks. Thus in the *Grammar of Demotic* which he composed in collaboration with others, and which promulgates his linguistic views, Triantafyllidis included structural elements – phonological and morphological – as well as lexical items that Psycharis had rejected.

Nevertheless, Triantafyllidis could not distance himself radically from old demoticism. He reacted against puristic structural elements because his linguistic thought was characterized by a clearly normative tendency, and because he regarded the work of demoticists in, as it were, a 'soteriological' light. Thus, he ultimately retained in his grammar many elements not acceptable to the linguistic feeling of the majority and, conversely, he underestimated or rejected other elements that most Greeks employ at a higher level of communication. Compared to Psycharism, out of which it emerged, Triantafyllidis' grammar marks a definite stage of progress, but still it did not escape the prescriptive – and therefore, to some extent, artificial – form of language. Seen from the linguistic point of view, the result was that we acquired yet another grammar which did not reflect faithfully the linguistic reality,

i.e. the actual oral speech of all Greeks who have enjoyed an elementary school education. Nevertheless, the demoticist movement marked a decisive step, indeed the most important one, along the road towards a definite solution of the language problem.

(vi) Modern Greek koine

On the one hand, the two extreme views expounded by the archaist and Psycharist movements, together with the forms that evolved from them – puristicism and demoticism, respectively – and on the other hand the protracted scholarly and other discussions (linguistic, nationalistic, paedagogic, historical, political, social) to which they gave birth, gradually led the great majority of Greeks, i.e. those free from linguistic fanaticism, to realize the need for the adoption of an intermediate linguistic form, a common form of language free from any extreme elements that would shock the common linguistic sensibility. Thus, especially during the last thirty years, and without any particular agreement on the part of rival 'specialists' or as a result of any official educational policy initiated by the state, a simplified linguistic form – a kind of synthesis of the two opposing theses – has achieved general acceptance.

This linguistic form, Modern Greek koine, was advocated by a few sober scholars, for instance by the author of *Modern Greek Syntax*, Achilles Tzartanos, a linguist with a long teaching career. These people, following in the footsteps of Korais, and constantly sniped at by the fanatics, dared raise their voices and advocate, at first timidly, then more boldly, the cause of the linguistic form that resulted from the unavoidable meeting of demotic and katharevousa. This style, which is, somewhat pejoratively, known as the 'mixed language', was created gradually and unconsciously in the mouths of the Greeks as, over the years, they learned and used, at one and the same time, the two forms, katharevousa and demotic. Effortlessly and organically, there emerged a new linguistic form from a synthesis of the component parts and systems of its predecessors. On the base provided by the one mother-tongue (demotic) there was added the impressive edifice of our parallel linguistic tradition, katharevousa, and thus there was realized a synthesis on all levels. We have here, one might say, a third

linguistic form, a new one that in its totality is distinct from the partial elements that constitute it; it is this form that I call Modern Greek koine. Indeed, it is this linguistic form that was recently adopted as the official language of the state under the name 'Neoelliniki'. Being significantly different both from the language of a great part of literature and from that of popular songs, it has been characterized, somewhat ambiguously, as a 'demotic free of extremes'.

General observations

We shall now deal with the structure and the problems of Modern Greek koine after having formulated a few general remarks concerning the linguistic movements we examined above.

(i) A common characteristic of all the linguistic movements we mentioned – with the single exception of M. G. koine – is their normative approach to language. Archaism, Psycharism, purism, puristic and demoticism alike confront language in a prescriptive way; they prescribe for it instead of describing its actual condition. All of them, basically, are movements of a 'monistic' nature, characterized by a single-mindedness (with all the dangers inherent in such an attitude) towards the delicate, complicated and complex phenomenon of human behaviour that language is. These movements have systematically and myopically ignored one dimension or another of linguistic communication, a situation that is justifiable, but only partly so, since the appropriate historical conditions for a profounder consideration of the problem had not yet been reached in Greece.

(ii) It must be noted that in the wake of the Psycharic movement and its consequences, the search for a solution to the language problem was polarized between katharevousa and demotic, and suffered from the consequent dilemma of 'pseudo-bilingualism'.

It has been maintained *ad satietatem*, and has finally been believed, that the only possible choice for an official M. G. language is between katharevousa and demotic: *tertium non datur*. Moreover, it has been maintained that this choice has to be between two languages (bilingualism), the language of katharevousa and that of demotic. In short, it never crossed the minds of the poor Greeks that any other solution was possible

except the adoption either of katharevousa or of demotic as the official and common language of the nation.

In fact, the error of the Greeks was twofold:

(a) They were plunging themselves into the abyss of a pseudo-dilemma and were confining themselves within the narrow limits of an artificial polarization which did not correspond to the linguistic reality that had already been apparent for a considerable time.

(b) The impression was created that they had to do with two different languages, with bilingualism, from which they could not escape otherwise than by choosing either one language or the other. The reality, in this case as well, was of course entirely different. The state of the Greek language has never been an impossible bilingualism, but simply a diglossia (in the sense of the distinction made by Ferguson).² We have to do not with two different languages (two phonological, morphological, lexical and syntactic systems) but with two parallel forms of one and the same language, or, stated differently, with two surface-structure differentiations of one more-or-less common deep structure. Thus the meeting and synthesis of the two parallel and only partially differing systems was not only possible, but was bound to be effected in the speech of those same individuals who were using the two systems in a parallel fashion.

(iii) This polarization reached its peak, fuelling fanaticism still further, as a result of the manifold associations and extensions that the language problem acquired during the various phases of its development.

One can easily understand how the use of either one of the two linguistic forms became indicative of a certain mentality, a particular way of thinking and cast of mind. Passing from the individual to the social realm, the use of either one form or the other became indicative of the more general attitude held by an entire group. Thus, certain 'equations' were gradually created, often on the basis of erroneous patterns and faulty associations:

Puricist = conservative / right-winger / obscurantist
(σκοταδιστής)

demoticist = progressive / left-winger / illuminated

2. A. Ferguson, 'Diglossia', *Word*, XV (1959), 325-40. '[Diglossia is] one particular kind of standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite rôle to play.'

Even the two oldest universities of the country were divided:

University of Athens = puricist (and therefore) conservative, etc.
University of Salonika = demoticist (and therefore) progressive, etc.

Even today the use of certain linguistic forms (phonological, morphological, lexical and even orthographic) places people within certain equations. A morphological form in *-ης* (for genitive singular) instead of *-εως* (*συνέλευσης, ένωσης, συνελεύσεως, ένώσεως*), a phonological variant with *χτ* instead of *κτ* (*ἀπόχτηση: ἀπόκτησι*), a lexical item like *κάλεσμα* instead of *πρόσκλησι*, or even a spelling in *-ει* instead of *-η* (*γράφει: γράψη*) indicates for certain Greeks a corresponding position of the user:

-ης / χτ / κάλεσμα / -ει = demoticist, progressive, left-winger
-εως / κτ / πρόσκλησι / -η = puricist, conservative, right-winger

Of course these equations, like all equations or labels, are for the most part artificial or deliberate identifications that are initiated and subsequently cultivated by the more fanatical adherents of one or the other linguistic form. Beyond a certain limited sociolinguistic truth that they do contain, they constitute arbitrary generalizations that can be explained historically. But it is easy to show how doubtful the value of such equations is. Let it suffice here to mention that the first formal consecration of demotic and the composition of its grammar by Triantafyllidis took place under the Metaxas dictatorship, whereas certain Greek 'socialists' of both earlier days and our own, such as Skliros, G. Papandreou and Mavros, have written and even spoken katharevousa.

II MODERN GREEK KOINE: ITS STRUCTURE AND PROBLEMS

At this point it is necessary to mention certain specific aspects of the current state of M. G. koine. From a linguistic viewpoint, within the framework of generative-transformational grammar, we may make the following general observation:

The particular transformational rules that produced demotic

and katharevousa, differentiating common basic structures, have been – gradually, with the passage of time – either diminished in number or wholly abolished by the linguistic feeling of the community. Thus the fairly united system that we call M. G. koine was consolidated. This should not be taken as implying, however, the complete abolition of the function of certain optional rules at almost all levels of the contemporary Greek language.

It would, I think, be interesting now to sketch some of the features of M. G. koine that make up its particular character.

(i) Phonology

At this level the influence of the learned tradition is obvious. Thus, for instance, the system of possible consonantal complexes that was imposed by the linguistic form of demotic has been altered. Phonological laws of the type

πτ → *φτ* (*πτωχός* → *φτωχός*)
κτ → *χτ* (*κτίζω* → *χτίζω*)
φθ → *φτ* (*φθάνω* → *φτάνω*)
χθ → *χτ* (*χθές* → *χτές*)
σθ → *στ* (*εἶσθε* → *εἴστε*)

have lost their absolute validity in M. G. koine. Thus the phonological structure of M. G. koine is generally characterized by a variety of consonantal complexes (*πτ/φτ, κτ/χτ*, etc.) which historically are the product of the influence of the learned tradition, mainly through the channel of vocabulary, while synchronically they constitute a new system:

<i>φτωχός</i>	– <i>φτυάρι</i>	: <i>πτῶμα</i>	– <i>οπτικός</i>
<i>χτίζω</i>	– <i>δάχτυλο</i>	: <i>αὐτοκτονία</i>	– <i>εκτιμῶ</i>
<i>φτηνός</i>	– <i>φτάνω</i>	: <i>εὐθυμός</i>	– <i>αφθονία, φθορά</i>
<i>χτές</i>	– <i>άνοιχτῇ</i>	: <i>ἐχθρός</i>	– <i>όχθη</i>
<i>εἴστε</i>	– <i>όρκίστηκα</i>	: <i>αἴσθημα</i>	– <i>άσθενής</i>

To these have been added many other possible combinations which also come from the learned tradition and broaden the number of possible complexes:

εὐσπλαχνία, εὐπλαστός, ἐπισπενσθῆ
-spl- -fpl- -fsθ-

(ii) Morphology

The noun and the verb, which constitute the body of M. G. koine, are formed as follows:

(a) Noun

The M. G. koine noun has been articulated into two main morphological categories: the two-case nouns (nouns with two morphologically distinct cases) and the three-case nouns. To these categories one might add a third: 'mixed'.

two-case nouns	three-case nouns	mixed nouns
πατέρ-ας -ες -α -ων	δρόμ-ος -οι -ου -ων -ο -ους	εἰσαγγελ-εύς -εῖς -έως -έων -έα
χώρ-α -ες χώρ-ας -ῶν		
δῶρ-ο -α -ου -ων		

Thus, the older situation, which led Tryantafyllidis to distinguish nouns on the basis of their gender (masculine-feminine-neuter), is no longer valid in MGK, in which feminine nouns ending in -ος (such as ἡ μέθοδος, ἡ ἄμμος) have prevailed over the older forms ἡ μέθοδο, ἡ ἄμμο, just as happened with feminine adjectives ending with -ης (εἰλικρινής, διεθνής, συνεπής, etc.).

(b) Verb

Even though the verb has undergone quite a substantial evolution, it has not attained the systematic simplicity of the noun. On the basis of the thematic structure of the present tense we can distinguish two categories of verbs:

ΣΥΜΦΩΝΟΛΗΚΤΑ ΦΩΝΗΕΝΤΟΛΗΚΤΑ

ΣΥΜΦΩΝΟΛΗΚΤΑ	ΦΩΝΗΕΝΤΟΛΗΚΤΑ	
γράφ- ω - α	ἀγαπά- ω - γα	(πάω)/λέω/τρώω ἐ-λε-γα ἐ-τρω-γα ἐ-και-γα ἐ-φται-γα
γράφ- ω α - ει	ἀγαπή- σω - σα - σει	
γράφ- ομαι - όμουν	ἀγαπι- έμαι - όμουν	
γράφτ- ηκα - ῶ - ῆ	ἀγαπη- θηκα - θῶ - θῆ	

Such a division is based on the dynamic evolution of the MGK verb. Nevertheless, there are still various secondary systems and subsystems that have not yet conformed to this evolution:

- μπορῶ, -εῖς, εἶ, -οὔμε, -εἶτε, -οὖν (not * μποράω)
- ἀγαπῶ (ἀγαπάω)
- ἀγαποῦσα (ἀγάπαγα)
- κοιμᾶμαι/λυπᾶμαι/φοβᾶμαι (*κοιμῆμαι . . .)
- θεωροῦμαι, -εῖσαι, -εἶται . . . (*θεωριέμαι . . .)

What can be said with some certainty is that in informal oral speech the verb seems to be moving in the direction of the two basic categories displayed above.

(iii) Vocabulary

The vocabulary of MGK is a characteristic result of the meeting of the two linguistic forms, katharevousa and demotic. The compound elements of the vocabulary of Modern Greek can be classified as follows:

- inherited words
- neologisms
- foreign borrowings

Most important is the second category. In this group we find

the great bulk of vocabulary that was created after the foundation of the Greek state. In order to cover the needs of administrative, cultural, scholarly and other communication, a large number of newly-coined words was created, basically within the framework of the learned language – words that subsequently passed for the most part into MGK (e.g. *σιδηρόδρομος, αυτοκίνητο, ταχυδρόμος, συμβολαιογράφος*, etc.).

As regards the third category, we observe that the mass of foreign words that overwhelmed the Greek language during the period when the nation was politically subjected to the Franks, Venetians and Turks, has been greatly diminished as a result of the organization of the Greek educational system and of the movement of purism. Contemporary MGK, in the mouths of Greeks of a certain education, retains foreign words especially in food terminology (Turkish and French words), the terminology of older crafts and professions (Turkish and Italian words) or of older domestic utensils, etc. Of course, like all other contemporary European languages, Greek has been bombarded lately by many words, especially English ones, introduced by the language of publicity and technology.

(iv) Syntax

Though this is somewhat speculative since there still are not enough relevant scholarly studies on the subject, one may maintain that the syntactic structure of MGK, like all other levels of the language, is the product of a synthesis strongly influenced by the learned tradition.

The syntactic structure of MGK follows in broad outlines the patterns of the learned tradition. Thus there is widespread use of subordinate syntax, whereas the purely demotic linguistic form (as in demotic songs and the popular language) is characterized by an extensive use of coordinate syntax. Nevertheless, the simplified construction of prepositions (that is, the virtual limitation of the cases combined with prepositions to only one, the accusative), the decrease in voices from three to two (suppression of the middle voice), the limited employment of a synthetic form of speech depending on participles, the abolition of the genitive absolute, etc. – all these developments have significantly differentiated the form of MGK from the linguistic form of katharevousa.

However, the structural forms that determine the style of MGK still have not attained their final definition, because MGK has not yet been widely used in scholarly, scientific, administrative and other types of communication.

I shall conclude with a few general remarks about MGK's current problems.

(i) MGK is still accused today, both by fanatical adepts of 'pure' demotic and by the supporters of 'genuine' katharevousa, of being a 'mixed' language. My personal view is that MGK is not the product of a mixture but of a synthesis, because language – any language – does not mix various elements fortuitously; rather, it selects its constituents on the basis of the more general structural principles that govern languages during the various phases of their evolution.

(ii) Seen from a synchronic viewpoint insofar as its structure is concerned, MGK is neither katharevousa nor demotic. As a synthesis, it forms, as we have already said, a new organic whole which has moved beyond the component parts that made it up. If some people continue to call this new linguistic form demotic, they are entitled to do so, provided that they realize that they are using an older term which they have now filled with new content.

(iii) Some supporters of the 'unmixed' forms in language still consider the existence of dual or parallel forms in MGK as an unpardonable drawback. Thus they accuse MGK of being a still 'unformed' language, and therefore an inadequate one for wide usage. Consequently they try to regulate it by imposing one form or another where the language is still using biformities either as free variants (*ἀγαπάει/ἀγαπά*) or in order to stress semantic differences or stylistic connotations (*λεπτά/λεφτά, έχθρός/όχτρος*). We have to do here with remnants of the singleminded, normative approach to language that is bound, we hope, to be abandoned soon. Everyone must realize – and this is happening daily – that it is only natural for a language like Greek, which has gone through so many adventures and has experienced so many different historical circumstances, to be characterized at its present stage not just by parallel forms, but by multiformities as well, which nonetheless will eventually vanish thanks to the dominance of the systematically stronger forms.

(iv) What constitutes a real and basic disadvantage for school teaching, and more generally for the learning of the grammar of MGK, is the lack of a purely synchronic description of the language. Triantafyllidis' grammar, which is the one most often used for the teaching of MGK, is, as we have explained, inadequate because, apart from its scholarly drawbacks, it is a purely normative grammar of the demotic – a grammar, in other words, which does not describe the Greek language in its present state. What the Greek language urgently needs, if MGK is to be consolidated and used correctly, is a reliable, scholarly grammatical and syntactical description. This will result in MGK's official codification and the creation of a model for the common use of all Greeks, who will then be taught MGK systematically at school. An equally reliable and scholarly dictionary, which we also lack, would contribute decisively towards completing our knowledge of the structure of the vocabulary of Modern Greek koine.

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Learnedisms in Costas Taktsis's *Third Wedding*¹

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Every language one can think of, probably including those of preliterate societies, contains learnedisms – very roughly what the French call *mots savants*. In the case of Modern Greek, learnedisms are traditionally attributed to the influence of katharevousa. This may or may not be entirely true: much depends on one's definition of the term *katharevousa*. When it comes to Greek, I prefer the English word *learnedism* to *mot savant*, since the items we shall be discussing below involve more types of learned elements than we find in the classical opposition of *mot savant* vs. *mot populaire*, e.g. *ecclésiastique* vs. *église*, respectively. Some have claimed that the Modern Greek situation is no different from the state of affairs in other literate societies.² The argument goes that, if we declare that modern Greece and Cyprus are characterized by a state of diglossia,³ then we should be prepared to label France, Germany, Britain,

1. An earlier version of this paper was read at the joint session of the American Philological Association and the Modern Greek Studies Association in Atlanta, Georgia, on 30 December 1977. An even earlier and substantially different version was presented in a lecture sponsored by the Department of Classics of The Ohio State University in April 1977. I am indebted to George Thaniel for commenting critically on the Atlanta version of the paper.

2. Cf. George I. Kourmoulis, *Ἡ ἐπιστομὸς γλῶσσα τοῦ ἔθνους*, 2nd ed. (Athens, 1949).

3. This term is defined as follows in Charles A. Ferguson, 'Diglossia' (*Word*, XV (1959), 325–40): '[Diglossia is] one particular kind of standardization where two varieties of a language exist side by side throughout the community, with each having a definite role to play.'

Spain, etc., also as diglossic countries. Although there are undeniable merits to viewing diglossia as more than a simple black-and-white matter, I doubt that many linguists would be willing to subscribe to a point of view which considers contemporary France fully as diglossic as, say, Greece or Morocco. Much as this topic seems to be worth pursuing, it clearly transcends the scope of this paper, and we shall now turn to more pertinent matters.

Learnedisms abound in everyday Greek urban discourse. On the other hand, literary demotic has on the whole tried to avoid them. Although this avoidance of learnedisms is understandable if one keeps in mind that literary demotic has been for a long time eminently militant and has even been used as something approaching a language-teaching device, the fact still remains that a linguistically sensitive reader is sometimes aware of the artificiality of the normalized, almost-totally-free-from-learnedisms kind of demotic which he finds in the utterances of educated urban characters in, say, the novels of Nikos Kazantzakis, Ilias Venezis, and, more recently, Evangelos Averoff-Tossizza. Sure enough, there has been a reaction to the dogmatic and partly unrealistic language of the militant demoticists.⁴ We find such a reaction in the writings of the surrealist poet Andreas Embeirikos – to mention just one name from the interwar period⁵ – and also in a probably increasing number of younger writers, Costas Taktis among others.⁶

In July 1973 George Savidis, one of Greece's foremost literary scholars, complimented Taktis in my presence for 'having freed the Greek language from the tyranny of the demotic'. Being but a benighted linguist, I had not yet at that time read anything by Taktis, but as it turned out later I had correctly interpreted Savidis's remark as meaning that Taktis had made considerable concessions to Greek as it is really spoken and had not limited

4. Cf. Kostas Kazazis, 'A Superficially Unusual Feature of Greek Diglossia', *Papers from the 12th Regional Meeting, Chicago Linguistic Society* (Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society, 1976), pp. 369–73.

5. See E. Kriaras, 'Σουρρεαλισμός και δημοτική', *Νέα Έστια*, Vol. 100 (15 July 1976), 919–21.

6. The name is Ταχτοής, but it appears as Taktis in the English translation of his novel *Τό τρίτο στεφάνι: The Third Wedding*, translated by Leslie Finer (London, 1967).

himself to what normally passes for 'true' demotic in certain Greek literary circles.⁷

One of the things that struck me while reading *The Third Wedding*⁸ – apart from its being a delightfully faithful portrait of some facets of modern Greek society – was that Taktis uses an enormous amount of learned material in that novel. One finds unstressed internal augments, as in ἀπεφάσισα (11; but also ἀποφάσισα [33], without an augment); learned consonant clusters abound, as in the form λεπτά for 'money' (37), although in most cases we do find λεφτά in that sense; there are large numbers of fancy single words like νυχθημερόν (28), although Taktis does not shun the non-learned μέρα-νύχτα; the book is teeming with fancy grammatical forms, many of them historical tenses of medio-passive verbs, like ἀνεμίχθην (116); and there are hundreds of sometimes partly demoticized groups consisting of more than one word and including collocations,⁹ clichés, puristic idiomatic expressions, classical or biblical sayings, mottos, proverbs, and so on: e.g., ἔκτρωμα τῆς φύσεως (9), ἰδίους ὄμμασι (25), διέρρηξα τὰ ἱμάτιά μου (93), μάχαιραν ἔδοσες, μάχαιραν θὰ λάβεις (131), 'ἄλλαι αἱ βουλαὶ ἀνθρώπων ἄλλα ὁ θεὸς κελεύει' (140; in quotes in Taktis's text), ὅπως ἀπεδείχθη ἐκ τῶν ὑστέρων (233).

I do not propose to engage here in a detailed taxonomy of the various types of learnedisms found in *The Third Wedding*, but it might be worth mentioning that several of the items which I have relegated to the wastebasket category which includes collocations, frozen expressions, quotations from the Scriptures, and the like behave very much like single lexical items in Modern Greek. This is also the case in English with, for

7. Cf. Kazazis, op. cit.

8. *Τό τρίτο στεφάνι* was first published in 1962. The page numbers (in parentheses) refer to the fifth edition (Athens. Hermēs, 1974). The term ἐκδόση, however, as in πέμπτη ἐκδόση, often refers to a printing rather than to what is usually understood by edition in English.

9. 'Collocation simply means the "placing together" of two or more words or phrases. In this sense "darling Mummy" or "bad man" are collocations, as is also "deleterious toadstools"; J. F. Wallwork, *Language and Linguistics: An Introduction to the Study of Language* (London, 1969), pp. 93–4. According to Householder, a collocation is 'a particular semi-idiomatic combination of words,' Fred W. Householder, *Linguistic Speculations* (Cambridge, 1971), p. 341.

instance, to look up (as in *I looked it up in the OED*), to kick the bucket, believe it or not, to say the least, I'm (etc.) sick and tired of, lots of, I (etc.) couldn't care less, and so on. I am not referring merely to those instances where Modern Greek spelling allows the writing of such items as one word, as in *έξίσου, έπιτέλους, τρώντι*. I am referring particularly to those cases where the modern orthography insists on writing each word separately, as in *έν μέρει, έλαβε χώραν, προς τί, δ μη γένοιτο*.

Militant demoticists typically castigate the use of what they consider as 'unnecessary' learned elements in the speech and the writings of their fellow-Greeks. They regard such 'lapses into katharevousa' as manifestations of sloppiness or lack of linguistic discipline, especially when non-demotic morphological elements are used – the ending *-ην* of *άνεμίχθην* is a case in point. One need hardly remind neohellenists that militant demoticism¹⁰ viewed the elimination of so-called 'unnecessary' learned elements as a categorical imperative for those members of the Greek intelligentsia who are not linguistically 'reactionary'. They are the intellectual leaders of their people, and consequently they should both learn Greek from the folk and at the same time teach the folk how to avoid the macaronic abominations of the *καθαρευουσιάνοι*. Their vigilance should therefore never be allowed to slacken.

Taktsis is linguistically on the whole fairly consistent. For instance, he uses only the form *λεπτά* (never *λεφτά*) in the meaning 'minutes' (101 and *passim*). He uses the forms *άδερφός* and *άδερφή* for 'brother' and 'sister' throughout his book, except once (as far as I could see) where he writes *άδελφός* (66) for no apparent contextual reason. He does write the forms with *-λφ-* when the context requires it, as when some speakers are on their best linguistic behaviour (168). In the meaning 'nurse', he consistently (and correctly) writes *άδελφή* (83 and *passim*).

Nevertheless, even Taktsis's numerous vacillations are not, in

10. By 'militant demoticism' I mean not only what Professor George Babinotis, of the University of Athens, labels 'psycharism' or 'old demoticism' but also what he calls 'demoticism,' i.e. the movement whose leading figure was Manolis Triandaphyllidis. Babinotis used those terms in his paper 'A Linguistic Approach to the Language Question in Greece', read at the joint session of the American Philological Association and the Modern Greek Studies Association in Atlanta, Georgia, on 30 December 1977, and printed in this present volume of *BMGS*.

my opinion, to be attributed to carelessness on his part.¹¹ They are, I believe, a true reflection of the vacillations one finds in real Modern Greek discourse, even in the speech of the same person and even during the same speech event: we read, for example, both *οὕτως ή άλλως* (53 and *passim*) and *έτσι κι αλλιώς* (54 and *passim*); both *έν τῷ μεταξύ* (34 and *passim*) and *στο μεταξύ* (27 and *passim*); both *δυνατόν/άδύνατον* (νά) (15, 25, and *passim*) and, less often, *δυνατό/άδύνατο* (νά) (23, 130, and *passim*); both *έξήτασα* (199), *άνήγγελλε* (201), as well as *άπάγγελλε* (imperfective past [=imperfect], 42), and *παράγγελλε* (ditto, 48); both *είμαι* (etc.) *εις θέσιν* (νά) (16 and *passim*) and *είμαι* (etc.) *σέ θέση* (νά) (14 and *passim*) – I must admit that I find the phrase with *εις θέσιν* more spontaneous and easier to swallow than its demotic translation *σέ θέση*.¹² Taktsis does, incidentally, make heavy use of katharevousa when he quotes what is being said at court proceedings (165ff.), when he has members of the legal profession talking (86), school principals addressing the parents of their pupils (98), and, of course, when someone is being sarcastic. An example of the latter use of katharevousa is when kyra-Ekávi, one of the protagonists in *The Third Wedding*, gets so irritated at her landlord's wife that she lifts her dressing-gown, breaks wind in the direction of her landlady, and says: *Ίδού ή άπάντησίς μου, κυρία Μαργαρίτη μου, και εις την μητρικήν σας γλώσσα!* (114). Note, however, that these are 'special cases': what is striking in Taktsis's novel is the realistic use of learnedisms in perfectly neutral contexts, in which it is doubtful that the author is after some special effect. To give just one example: Taktsis uses quite consistently the learned nominative and accusative plural endings (*-αι* and *-ας*, respectively) of

11. To the best of my recollection, there were only two differences worth mentioning between Taktsis's Greek in *The Third Wedding* and my own native variety of Athenian. The first was his consistent use of *τοιμάζω/τοιμάζομαι* (70 and *passim*), without initial *έ-*, where I have *έτοιμάζω/έτοιμάζομαι*. The second was his use of the forms *μύμπα/μύμπες* (192 and *passim*), where I have *βόμπα/βόμβες* – for me, *μύμπα* is stylistically marked: I think of it as somewhat facetious, or, if the context warrants such a judgement, as slightly uneducated. Taktsis does, however, use *βόμπα* in the collocation *έμπρηστική βόμπα* (232).

12. By this last remark I by no means wish to question the correctness of the demoticist claim (beginning with Psycharis, if I am not mistaken) that a great many nineteenth-century katharevousa turns of speech were themselves literal translations of similar phrases in the major west European languages and to that extent 'un-Greek.'

isosyllabic masculine nouns in -ης. Thus, he writes *νὰ μὴν πετάω ἄδικα λεφτὰ γιὰ προγυμναστάς* (64), *λησταί* (74), *παραθερισταί* (75), *οἱ δικασταί* (87), *μήπως λίγους ἐραστὰς εἶχες καὶ σὺ*; (128), *οἱ κομμουνισταί* (308), etc. Apart from the form *συμμαθητές* on page 51, for which I cannot account on stylistic grounds, the only -ές ending that I noted in the plural of such nouns was on page 296, where Taktis writes *ἔκανε νόημα στοὺς 'συναγωνιστές'*, and where *συναγωνιστές* is in quotation marks in order to indicate that this is the way communist guerrillas talked – the scene takes place in Athens during the communist uprising of December 1944.

It is difficult to say offhand whether or not the statistical incidence of learnedisms in contemporary so-called 'καθολιλουμένη' is exaggerated in *The Third Wedding*.¹³ I confess, though, that there was one question which I could not help asking myself all along as I was reading the book, namely whether Taktis loaded his novel with learnedisms 'just for the hell of it' or whether he actually 'heard' his characters speak in that fashion. I counted so many different learned elements, especially of the wastebasket variety I mentioned above (clichés, idiomatic phrases, etc.), that at times I suspected Taktis of engaging in a wager with himself to try and use as many such elements as possible.¹⁴ In an attempt to drive home this point, I list below a few dozen such items (the list is far from being exhaustive). Many items occur several times in the novel, so the parentheses indicate the page of the first occurrence of each item. In a number of instances, I have provided part of the contexts in which the learnedisms in question occur: *ἕτερον ἐκάτερον* (13), *ἐπ' οὐδενὶ λόγῳ* (14), *εἰς βάρος μας* (15),

13. Babiniotis refers to this form of Greek as 'Modern Greek koine', loc. cit. One should keep in mind, of course, that terms like *demotic*, *katharevousa*, and *καθολιλουμένη* are relative and designate vague and largely indeterminate areas in a continuum.

14. One might mention in passing that there is something like a precedent to this sort of thing in Modern Greek literature: Kazantzakis used his *Odyssey* also as a repository of dialectal Greek words which he hated to see disappear as a consequence of the replacement of the local dialects by the neohellenic koine. See Peter Bien, *Kazantzakis and the Linguistic Revolution in Greek Literature* (Princeton, 1972), especially chapter 7, 'The *Odyssey*, *Iliad*, and Other Writings', pp. 204ff.

προσωποποίηση τοῦ διαβόλου ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς (16), *ἔχοντας πικράν πείρα* (16), *καὶ οὕτω καθ' ἐξῆς* (17), *πρῶτον . . . , δεύτερον . . .* (21), *ἀφ' ενός . . . , ἀφ' ἑτέρου . . .* (23), *ἀπεποιήθη τὴν προσφορά* (27), *τό ἀπολωλὸς πρόβατο* (30), *μέγα μυστήριο!* (31), *πρὸς στιγμήν* (35), *μέχρις ἐσχάτων* (36), *ἐν θριάμβῳ* (44), *οὐδ' ἐπὶ στιγμήν* (45), *ἐγὼ δὲν κατέρχομαι βεβαίως στὸ ἐπίπεδὸ τῆς* (52), *εἰρήσθω ἐν παρόδῳ* (55), *παντὶ τρόπῳ* (55), *θοὺ Κύριε φυλακὴν τῷ στόματί μου* (56), *ψυχῇ τε καὶ σώματι* (57), *ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πλεῖστον* (58), *μέχρι ἀηδίας* (62), *κακὴν κακῶς* (63), *βρὲ ζῶον* (64), *δωρεὰ ἐν τῇ (ῳῇ)* (65), *ἐν ἀποστρατεία* (66), *ἐπ' ἀνδραγαθία* (66), *ἀνελάμβανε τὴν ὀλοτόμηση μοναστηριακῶν δασῶν κατ' ἀποκοπὴν* (71), *τοῖς μετρητοῖς* (72), *τόφεραν βαρέως* (72), *δπου γῆς καὶ πατρίς* (73), *τὸν κώδωνα τοῦ κινδύνου* (73), *ἕνα καὶ τὸ αὐτό* (76), *ὅταν ὁ ἀλέκτωρ ἐφώνησε τρίς* (73), *πίστευε καὶ μὴ ἐρεῦνα* (78), *ἐκώφευσα* (78), *ὅπερ τῆς ἀμοιβαίας κατανοήσεως* (78), *συμβούλια ἐπὶ συμβουλίων* (79), *ἐν ἀνάγκῃ* (80), *μέρος προδιαγεγραμμένου σχεδίου* (81), *ἀγωγή διαζυγίου ἐπὶ ἐγκαταλείψει τῆς συζυγικῆς στέγης καὶ ἀγνώστῳ διαμονῇ* (85), *κατὰ προτροπὴν τοῦ* (86), *ἐναντίον μιᾶς τόσον καταφώρου ἀδικίας* (87), *ἦταν τῶν ἀδυνάτων ἀδύνατον* (88), *ἦταν ὑπεράνω τῶν δυνάμεών μου* (88), *πρὸς χάριν τῶν παιδιῶν μου* (88), *ἀπὸ προσώπου τῆς γῆς* (90), *ὀλίγου δεῖ καὶ θὰ τὸν τουφέκιζαν* (90), *κατόπιν ἐντολῆς μου* (91), *πρὸ πολλοῦ* (91), *δυσὲς μέρες πρὸ τῆς δίκης* (91), *μόλις καὶ μετὰ βίας* (94), *ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ* (95, sic for *ἐπ' αὐτοφώρῳ*), *τοῦ ζητοῦσε συγγνώμην* (97; the fully learned form is, of course, *συγγνώμην*), *τὸ μὲν πνεῦμα πρόθυμο, ἀλλ' ἡ σὰρξ ἀσθενής* (99), *ἔγινε πῦρ καὶ μανία* (100), *διάταγμα περὶ ἐθελουσίας ἐξόδου τῶν παλαιῶν ὑπαλλήλων* (102), *δουλεῖα ἀθλητικοῦ συντάκτου* (105), *οἱ σχέσεις τους ἦταν ὑπὲρ ποτε καλές* (105), *περὶ τίνος ἐπρόκειτο* (105), *ἐν ὀλίγοις* (108), *ἐπεδείξατο μετάνοιαν καὶ ἀρίστην διαγωγὴν* (109), *μιὰ ὥραῖα πρωία* (114), *ἐπὶ τόπου* (118), *πρὸς μεγάλην μου ἐκπληξιν* (119), *σάν τὸ πῦρ τῆς κολάσεως* (122), *μέσῳ ἐμοῦ* (129), *νὰ σκεφτοῦμε μαζί περὶ τοῦ πρακτέου* (129), *ἐξ ἐνστίκτου* (130), *ἐκ πείρας* (136), *αὐτὸ πιά εἶναι ἄνω ποταμῶν* (136), *πρὸς τὸ παρόν* (140), *στὰ χαρτιά ἐξακολουθοῦσε νάναι ἡ νόμιμος χήρα τοῦ* (150), *ὑπὸ τὰ ὄμματα τοῦ καταστηματάρχη* (153), *ὑπὸ τὸν ὄρον . . . ὅτι . . .* (155), *ἐν τῇ ἀφελείᾳ μου* (155), *ὑπὸ τύπον δανείου* (156), *θὰ σὲ στείλω συνοδείᾳ* (160), *εἶχε ἐκ θεοῦ τὸ χάρισμα νὰ . . .* (163), *διὰ τοῦ ὑπνωτισμοῦ* (163), *ἐπνεαν μένεα ἐναντίον τοῦ* (165), *μήνυση ἐπὶ μοιχείᾳ* (167), *κεκλεισμένων τῶν θυρῶν* (170), *εἰς ἐνδείξιν ὑπερτάτης ἀδυναμίας*

(172), θὰ κρίνει κατὰ συνείδησιν (173), ἀγρὸν ἡγόραζε (174), ἔστω καὶ μετὰ θάνατον (175), κινούμενος ἀπὸ αἰσθημα φιλανθρωπίας (175), νὰ κηρύξουν τὸν Γκάτσο ἔνοχο φόνου ἐκ προμελέτης μ' ἐλαφρυντικά (177), λύονται διὰ μιᾶς ὅλα τῆς τὰ προβλήματα (182), ποὺ φυλούσαμε ὡς κόρην ὀφθαλμοῦ (184), ἐξ αἰτίας τοῦ χαρακτηῖρος τῆς (187), ἐναντίον τοῦ Ἀξονος (188), μᾶς εἰδοποιούσαν ἐκ τῶν προτέρων διὰ τοῦ τύπου (189), ὡς διὰ μαγείας (190), διεκόπτοντο μέχρι νεωτέρας διαταγῆς (192), οὐδὲν κακὸν ἀμιγὲς καλοῦ (193), αἰτιάσο ἀδίκως τὸν ἐαυτό σου (200), ἐν καιρῷ εἰρήνης (201), σ' ἓνα στρατιωτικὸ νοσοκομεῖο τῶν Πατρῶν (206), ἀν φτάσουμε στὸ νῦν καὶ δεῖ (208), εἰς μάτην τοῦλεγα καὶ τοῦ ξανάλεγα πῶς . . . (208), ἀπόμεινα σὰ στήλη ἄλατος (209), ἓνα σπρωξίδι ἀνευ προηγουμένου (211), ἔγινε βεβαιότης (212), εἰς βοήθειαν τῶν μακαρονάδων (218), ἀντὶ ἄλλης ἀπαντήσεως (220), ὅλα θὰ πᾶνε κατ' εὐχὴν (221), γιὰ τριάκοντα ἀργύρια (222), κι ὡς ἐκ συμφώνου, πέσαμε στὰ γόνατα (232), νὰ σοῦ πεῖ τί ἐστὶ Χίτλερ (236), νὰ τῆς δείξω, ἔστω καὶ ἐμμέσως (237), δὲν ξέρουμε τί μᾶς ἐπιφυλάσσει ἡ αὔριον (239), ἔφυγαν ἄρον-ἄρον (239), μιὰ μέθοδο ἀγγλικῆς ἀνευ διδασκάλου (239), τῆς διηγῆθηκα ἐν λεπτομερείᾳ (242), τὸ διέλυαν εἰς τὰ ἐξ ὧν συνετέθη (242), νὰ ἐπαναστατεῖ κατὰ τῆς τυραννίας τῆς (250), εἰς πείσμα τῶν πάντων (257), ἡ κατάστασις αὕτη δὲν εἶναι δυνατόν νὰ διαρκέσει ἐπ' ἀπειρον (262), τὰ φεγγάρια τοῦ μέλιτος (263), ἀνθρώπους ποὺ ὡς τότε ἤξερα μόνον ἐξ ὀνόματος (264), τὴν ἡμέρα τοῦ συμβάντος (265), ἔπνεε τὰ λοίσθια (265), βεβαίως ἀνέκαθεν θαύμαζα τὸ λέγειν τῆς (266), οὐδὲν κρυπτὸν ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον (276), ἦταν πιά τετελεσμένο γεγονός (276), ἦταν συσσίτιο πείνης (277), μακρὰν τοῦ νὰ χαρεῖ (281), ἀδυνάτου κράσεως (283), ἐν τούτοις (285), δόξα σοι ὁ θεός (290), οἱ νεκροὶ δεδικαίωνται (303), ὄνειρα θερινῆς νυκτός (309), δὲ μ' ἀζιώνει κὰν ἀπαντήσεως (312).

The principal characters of *The Third Wedding* are two women: Nína, who is also the narrator, and kyra-Ekávi. Nína was born at the beginning of this century, whereas kyra-Ekávi must have been born around the 1880s. I'd say they are both middle-class women, although there are some vague indications that kyra-Ekávi may be of lower-middle class origin (cf. p. 266). It should be emphasized, however, that whatever those indications may be they have nothing to do with kyra-Ekávi's linguistic behaviour. Both women, when upset, are capable of using a juicy, and occasionally folksy, version of the vernacular,

but they are also perfectly at home in typical middle-class καθομιλουμένη, replete with the type of learned elements mentioned earlier.

We might ask whether it is necessary to assume that these two women have had a great amount of formal education in order to be able to master so much 'katharevousa'. Although at least Nína did get her high-school diploma (ἀπολυτήριον γυμνασίου), neither woman is in any way educated to the extent that so many urban Greek women are today. I went through the first fifty-seven pages of *The Third Wedding* underlining all those elements, whether learned or not, which could be construed as collocations, frozen expressions, clichés, and in general as ready-made. It turned out that I had to underline roughly one half of the text. Fred W. Householder has written that there is relatively little that is linguistically novel in what we say in our everyday lives.¹⁵ He was trying to dampen somewhat the fascination which some linguists, beginning in the late 1950s, felt with the supposedly wonderfully novel character of the utterances which people produce in their lives. Even though admittedly 'further research' into this question would not hurt, there is very little doubt in my mind that Householder was right. In fact, I submit that collocations, clichés, etc., play such an important rôle in everyday oral and written discourse that the great majority of the learnedisms in *The Third Wedding* do not necessarily require an awful lot of formal education. I include

15. See his review of Ronald W. Langacker, *Language and Its Structure. Some Fundamental Linguistic Concepts* (New York, 1968), in *Language* 45.4 (1969), 886-97, especially pp. 888-9, as well as op. cit., p. 131 and *passim*. It will not come as a surprise to those familiar with certain types of bilingualism that I have recorded a great many Greek ready-made phrases in the Arvanitika dialects of Albanian spoken in Corinthia, such as ἐν τῷ μεταξύ, ἐν πάσῃ περιπτώσει, γιὰ νὰ μὴν τὰ πολυλογώμε, βρὲ τὸν κερατὰ, etc. A specific example is *bija e priftit embasiperiptosi* = *martua* 'at any rate the priest's daughter got married'. Note that this is not an instance of code switching (from one language to another), just as we do not switch codes in English when we say *ad nauseam*, *de facto*, *par excellence*, and the like. In Arvanitika, ἐν πάσῃ περιπτώσει behaves like a single item *embasiperiptosi*. In monolingual contexts, this is also known as 'automatization': 'We thus call automatization what, in the case of phrases, is sometimes called the lexicalization of phrases,' Bohuslav Havránek, 'The Functional Differentiation of the Standard Language', in *A Prague School Reader on Esthetics, Literary Structure, and Style*, selected and translated from the original Czech by Paul L. Garvin (Washington, 1964), p. 10.

here those items which would seem to betray a solid knowledge of katharevousa grammar, such as the internal unstressed augments and personal endings which we find in forms like ἀνεκάλυφα (20), ἀπελάμβανε (29), ἐνεθάρρυνα (208), μ' ἐξελεύριζαν (253), συνεβούλευσε (43), συνεκρούσθη (46), ἀπεπειράθη (53; but ἀποπειράθηκε on p. 303), ἀπεφασίσθη (105).

Middle-class urban Greeks have been hearing (and reading) such forms for so long that many of them may very well learn them as special items, that is, without necessarily mastering the rules of the system to which those forms belong. Thus, many Athenians may learn συνεκρούσθη and its plural counterpart συνεκρούσθησαν in more or less the way they learn that, say, οἰκοδόμος (or χτίστης) means 'bricklayer'.¹⁶ The failure to learn the rules, for instance, of when to use internal augment in verbs of learned origin often results in the well-known type of overcorrection where the augment is used also in the imperative, as in ἐπέμενε καὶ θὰ πετύχεις – for ἐπίμενε καὶ θὰ πετύχεις. Surely most neohellenists can cite instances of not terribly well-educated people peppering their speech or their writings with learnedisms, with varying success. To limit ourselves to the consonant clusters σχ and σκ, we are sometimes treated to hyperurbanisms like σχολίωσις (for σκολίωσις), σχέφθηκα (for σκέφθηκα), and even σχέτο (for σκέτο) – I read σχέτο in a shop-window in Athens in August 1973, and I know a middle-middle class Athenian woman who consistently pronounces σχολίωσις and σχέφθηκα. Suspected affectation in behaviour, whether linguistic or otherwise, generally evokes negative feelings. At the same time, I for one cannot help sympathizing with such people. Diglossia has conditioned a number of not frightfully secure speakers into avoiding

16. In other words, there may be gaps in the paradigm for some speakers – I owe this formulation to Joseph Pentheroudakis. Although I have not run any experiments to test such a hypothesis, it is conceivable that a given speaker has something like the following paradigm, give or take a few details here and there: ἀνεμίχθην, ἀνακατεύτηκες, ἀνεμίχθη, ἀνεμίχθμεν, ἀνακατευτήκατε, ἀνεμίχθησαν. In most cases, the missing items in the ἀνεμίχθ–paradigm will in all probability be readily comprehensible (i.e. there will be no gaps in the receptive paradigm), even though the speaker may never use them himself – that is, the gaps exist in the paradigm only as far as that speaker's *productive* use of the language is concerned.

anything that might suggest a peasant or lower-class background, to say nothing of their fear of being suspected of leftist leanings.

For some reason, the author of *The Third Wedding*, who seems to take such pleasure in playing with language, does not use overcorrections to place his characters socially, or even merely to amuse his readers. Be that as it may, and despite the mild suspicion expressed above that he may be slightly exaggerating the statistical incidence of learnedisms, Costas Taktis has given us in *The Third Wedding* a refreshingly faithful picture of what contemporary urban Greek sounds like. Prescriptive demoticists may not like Taktis's 'undisciplined' language, but I hope that few will question the linguistic realism of his novel.

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Habitual Aspect in Ancient and Modern Greek

BRIAN NEWTON

1. The Greek language has remained during its long history remarkably stable in respect of its morphology, syntax and lexicon, as has been commonly observed.¹ The conventional wisdom on the matter is that Greek has been particularly subject to conscious archaizing. It is therefore interesting to turn to an area within the rule systems of the language in which learned influence, owing to the subtle and elusive character of the principles involved, can have played at best a negligible role – that area which involves the semantic rules governing the choice of verbal aspect, or the distinction realized in sentences by the features ‘imperfective’ and ‘perfective’ (corresponding to present and aorist stems respectively). In this article I wish to look at an important class of structures in which the modal predicates such as ancient *δύναμαι* ‘can’, *δεῖ* ‘it is necessary’ (modern *μπορῶ, πρέπει*) take as their complements expressions referring to multiple events (as in, for instance, the Modern Greek *πρέπει νὰ πηγαίνω κάθε μέρα*, ‘I must go every day’).

1. This article represents an expanded version of a paper ‘Verbal aspect in Ancient and Modern Greek’ read at a joint session of the Modern Greek Studies Association and the American Philological Association in Atlanta, 1977, and much of the material in it occurs in a paper read at the Third International Conference in Historical Linguistics in Hamburg, 1977, to appear in the *Proceedings*. For bibliographical references and more detailed theoretical discussion see my ‘scenarios, modality and verbal aspect in Greek’ (*Language*, forthcoming). I am grateful to the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation for the award of a Fellowship which enabled me to devote twelve months (1974–5) to the study of verbal aspect in Modern Greek.

Before we proceed to more theoretical points let us consider what on the face of it is a quite striking statistical indication that in spite of the replacement of the Ancient Greek infinitive in modal complements by structures of *νά* + finite verb, the rules governing aspectual choice survive unscathed. A rough count of the aspect of such infinitives as are governed by *δεῖ* and *δύναμαι* in the New Testament showed that in a total of 282 instances the imperfective form comprised 89, or 32 per cent. In thirteen plays by the modern writer D. Psathas I counted 518 examples of the corresponding *πρέπει* and *μπορῶ* with imperfective complements in 149 cases, or 29 per cent of the total. A more detailed breakdown of the figures is given in Table I:

TABLE I

Verbal aspect in the complements of *δεῖ* and *δύναμαι* in the New Testament and of *πρέπει* and *μπορῶ* in thirteen plays by D. Psathas. Figures are given for positive and negative sentences

	New Testament		Psathas	
	<i>δεῖ</i>		<i>πρέπει</i>	
	Pos.	Neg.	Pos.	Neg.
Pf.	57	3	116	15
Impf.	34(37%)	2(40%)	51(30%)	6(29%)
	<i>δύναμαι</i>		<i>μπορῶ</i>	
Pf.	49	84	105	133
Impf.	22(31%)	31(27%)	62(37%)	30(18%)

If we ignore the figures for negative sentences with *δεῖ* and *πρέπει*, which are probably too small to be of significance, we note that Hellenistic Greek shows a slight preference for imperfective *vis-à-vis* Modern Greek in positive structures with the strong modal 'necessary' and a more pronounced preference in negative ones with the weak 'possible'. Two hypotheses, not necessarily inconsistent, suggest themselves. One is that because choice of aspect depends essentially on semantic factors it may simply be that the sorts of meaning conveyed by New Testament structures are more likely to select

imperfective expressions (for instance, it might be that they more frequently refer to continuous or repeated action). Indeed it seems in general to be the case that the overall frequency of perfective forms increases as we approach the level of ordinary conversation, which presumably concerns the specific, concrete event types of everyday life, while in more abstract contexts they are less frequent. In Psathas himself, whose plays approximate by and large to the style of ordinary conversation, the overall frequency of perfective forms is about 85 per cent, while in abstract discussions such as are found in philosophical texts, the figure drops to about 70 per cent. The second hypothesis would be to the effect that the rules linking meaning and expression have undergone modification, although as the figures of Table I clearly indicate, such modification may have been marginal. On this explanation one might expect that modern translations of the New Testament would sometimes switch aspect, and an examination of two such translations (or perhaps 'paraphrases') showed that this was in fact the case, the switch being normally from imperfective to perfective. In the versions of P. N. Trembelas and I. T. Kolitsaras I counted six cases in which an original imperfective after *δεῖ* had been replaced by at least one of the translators with the perfective; a similar replacement occurred in fourteen cases involving *δύναμαι*, ten of which involved negative sentences.² The converse switch with these modals did not seem to occur, although the deontic modal *ἐξεστί* is followed by the perfective *δοῦναι* in the three references to the episode of the tribute money, but by the imperfective form of 'give' in the modern translations.

It is not possible to comment sensibly on the differences and on the far more impressive resemblances between the aspectual systems of Hellenistic and Modern Greek, without some sort of theoretical framework incorporating an appropriate set of devices for representing the meaning of sentences and rules linking these to surface expression. The next section outlines some such theory for habitual aspect and this is then illustrated by a discussion of cases in which aspectual phenomena have

2. The references for *δεῖ* are Luke 13:33, John 4:4, Acts 9:6, 16:30, 25:10, II Cor. 11:30, and for *δύναμαι* (positive), Matt. 19:12, John 1:46, 9:16, Heb. 5:7 (negative), John 3:2, 3:27, 5:19, 5:30, 9:4, 9:33, 10:29, 12:39, 16:12, Acts 27:15.

apparently remained in general constant from the Hellenistic period to the present. A final section mentions two of the ways in which usage may have, and apparently has, changed.

2. Many sentences referring to indefinitely repeated events have a form something like 'every time p , q ', which may be put a little more formally as (1).

(1) At all times t (if p at t then q at t)

Such expressions may be called (after Rescher 1966) 'scenario expressions'. An example might be 'every time he smokes, he coughs'. In Greek (and in Russian, which has an aspectual system functionally quite comparable to Greek) both the antecedent (p) and the consequent (q) are in the imperfective aspect, irrespective of tense. Thus, in the present, modern Greek has (2).

(2) Κάθε φορά που καπνίζει βήχει
'Every time he smokes, he coughs.'

The past counterpart of this follows the same aspectual pattern (κάθε φορά που κάπνιζε έβηχε). Notice that the t in our scenario expressions is a variable over the time intervals associated with events, so that it corresponds roughly to the sense 'occasion' rather than to the 'moments' of conventional tense logic, which are represented as points along an abstract time dimension existing independently of events and governed by the axioms of denseness and continuity (that is, between any two moments there is always another, and the time line is without gaps). The rule may be stated as (3).

(3) When in the logical form of a sentence an event expression reflects the antecedent or consequent of a scenario expression (cf. (1) above), its main verb appears with imperfective aspect.³

3. I am grateful to one of this journal's readers for citing two instances of *κάθε φορά* structures with the perfective (aorist) in both clauses: (a) 'Πραγματικά μεγάλος μου φάνηκε ο Καβάφης, κάθε φορά που τον συνάντησα στο σπίτι του . . .' (I. A. Σαρεγιάννη, *Σχόλια στον Καβάφη*, 1964, σελ. 40); (b) *Κάθε φορά που ήρθες στά τσαντήρια μας, ή Πείνα πήρε στράτα . . .* (Π. Πρεβελάκη, *Ο ήλιος του θανάτου*, Έστία, σελ. 168). The second is attributed to a Bulgarian

The cases which interest us are those in which a scenario expression is combined with a modal. Consider for example (4) and (5).

(4) Μπορείς νάρθής όποτε θέλεις
(5) Μπορείς νάρχεσαι όποτε θέλεις
'You can come whenever you want.'

Although the English translation fails to indicate any semantic distinction, there are in fact two different ways of combining the scenario structure 'at all times t if you want at t to come then you come at t ' with the modal 'you are able' ('poss'). The modal may have the consequent alone, or it may have the whole scenario expression as its scope. The logical form displaying modalized consequent will be as in (6).

(6) At all times t (if you want at t to come then poss at t (you come))⁴

It will be noted that the 'you want' and the 'poss' are both associated with a universally bound t of a scenario expression and hence appear in imperfective aspect in Greek, while the 'you come' is not so associated and appears, as in (4), in the perfective. On the other hand the logical form corresponding to (5) will have the whole scenario within the scope of 'poss', so that both 'you want' and 'you come' will be associated with a universally bound t and assigned imperfective aspect (see 7).

(7) poss(at all times t (you want at t to come then you come at t))

The difference may seem subtle, and, as we shall see, in

speaker, and so might perhaps represent a deliberate infelicity. All I can suggest in the case of the first is that we do not have a scenario expression; that is, the sense is not that Cavafy appeared great every time the writer met him (but not necessarily at other times), but that he *was* great, and the writer was struck by this every time he met him. It is worth mentioning that the few native speakers with whom I have discussed these sentences find them correct but unnatural.

4. For readers unfamiliar with the conventions used here to indicate meanings, (6) may be roughly paraphrased as 'at any time, if at that time you want to come, then it is possible at that time that you come'; similarly (7) would correspond to 'it is possible that at any time if you want at that time to come, then you come at that time.' The abbreviation poss of 'possible' is used to express the various notions 'may', 'can', 'be able', as well as 'possible' itself.

structures of this general type speakers do in fact display some degree of vacillation in the choice of aspect, for the reason that the action designated in the consequent (here 'coming') is often repeatable in the real world so that it makes sense for it to be universally quantified. In the case of actions such as marrying (for the first time) or dying, which can occur only once during the existence of a given individual, modalization of the complete scenario cannot occur. For instance a mother might say to her daughter 'you may marry whenever you want' in the sense 'at all times t if you want at t to marry then POSS at t (you marry)', in which 'you marry' is disassociated from the t and expressed in Greek by the perfective (*μπορείς οποτε θέλεις να παντρευτῆς*). But the corresponding imperfective *παντρεύεσαι* does not occur as it implies that the mother is permitting the girl to marry as often as she wants, implying in turn a logical form 'POSS' at all times t (you want at t to marry then you marry at t).

3. Turning now to Hellenistic Greek let us first consider one or two cases which illustrate how the rules governing aspectual choice have persisted to the present day. The New English Bible translates Mark 14:7 as (8).

- (8) 'You have the poor among you always and you can help them whenever you like.'

πάντοτε γὰρ τοὺς πτωχοὺς ἔχετε μεθ' ἑαυτῶν, καὶ ὅταν θέλητε δύνασθε αὐτοὺς εὐποιῆσαι

Helping the poor is presumably a repeatable event but the use of the perfective in the New Testament phrase is quite compatible with its being treated as a one shot affair, while the imperfective would indicate the logical form (10), which marks explicitly the possibility of indefinite repetition.

- (9) POSS at all times t (if you want at t to help them then you help them at t)

It may be added that the distinction expressed in logical form by the relative left to right ordering of the universal quantifier and the modal predicate is in general mapped directly in terms of surface order, so that in this instance, just as we have in the logical form the order 'at all times t ', 'POSS', so on the surface we have *ὅταν* 'whenever' than *δύνασθε* 'you can', although the New English Bible reverses this.

We saw above that in the case of nonrepeatable events (such as 'marry x ') embedding under modals is associated uniquely with logical forms in which the modal has the event expression alone in its scope and never a complete scenario expression (since this would indicate repeatability of both antecedent and consequent event). We noted that with repeatable events there is often vacillation, and Modern Greek speakers will tend to accept as synonymous, or at any rate have great difficulty in paraphrasing differentially, pairs of sentences varying only in the aspect of complement clauses, in spite of what on our analysis would show up in logical form as differing relative scopes of the modal and universal temporal operator 'at all times t '. For instance, in the course of an investigation conducted in 1975, 50 speakers were asked to select what they deemed to be the most appropriate aspectual choice in sentence (10), for which a context was provided referring to the rules governing the movements of reformatory inmates.

- (10) *Όποτε θέλουν τὰ παιδιά μπορούν νὰ βγαίνουν/βγοῦν*
'whenever they want the boys may go out'

Informants were almost equally divided between imperfective *βγαίνουν* and perfective *βγοῦν*. The logical forms corresponding to these selections are as in (11) and (12).

- (11) POSS at all times t (if they want at t to go out then they go out at t)

- (12) At all times t (if they want at t to go out then POSS at t (they go out))

The corresponding interpretations would presumably suggest paraphrases such as, respectively, 'they have standing permission whereby they go out whenever they want' and 'whenever they want they are given permission *ad hoc* to go out'. It is therefore particularly striking that Hellenistic Greek seems to have displayed precisely this kind of indeterminacy. Consider the two passages meaning 'is it permitted to cure people on the Sabbath or not?'

- (13) *Ἐξεστι τῷ σαββάτῳ θεραπεῦσαι ἢ οὐ;* (pf.) (Luke 14:3)

- (14) *Εἰ ἔξεστι τοῖς σάββασι θεραπεύειν;* (impf.) (Matt. 12:10)

One may note that while this variation seems to carry little if any clear semantic contrast, it does imply that a surface parsing

based on considerations of logical form will bracket the sentences differently. The above versions (13) and (14) would correspond to (15) and (16) respectively.

(15) (Is it permitted to cure people) on the Sabbath?

(16) Is it permitted (to cure people on the Sabbath)?

Thus one principle which has persisted throughout at least two millennia is that which assigns imperfective to event expressions associated in logical form with the universally quantified *t* of scenario expressions. Another is somewhat more subtle and involves constructions which appear on the surface as lacking overt scenario features but which imply underlying scenario expressions. In particular we find that sentences such as 'I can swim', 'I can read', in which there is reference to general abilities, are assigned imperfective complements, while their negative counterparts show up with perfective. Furthermore we find that structures with deontic 'may' also follow the principle 'positive: imperfective; negative: perfective'. For Modern Greek consider *μπορώ να κολυμπώ* 'I can swim' (or more naturally *μπορώ/ξέρω και κολυμπώ*) versus *μπορώ να κολυμπήσω*, and for Hellenistic Greek (17) and (18).

(17) ἢ πῶς δύνασαι λέγειν (impf.) τῷ ἀδελφῷ σου, Ἀδελφέ, ἄφες ἐκβάλω τὸ κάρφος τὸ ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σου, αὐτὸς τὴν ἐν τῷ ὀφθαλμῷ σου δόκον οὐ βλέπων; (Luke 6:42)

'How can you say to your brother "let me take the speck out of your eye" when you are blind to the plank in your own?'

(18) οὐ δύναται δὲ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς εἰπεῖν (pf.) τῇ χειρὶ, Χρεῖαν σου οὐκ ἔχω. (I Cor. 12:21)

'The eye cannot say to the hand "I do not need you"'

My original view of the matter was that negation *per se* is a 'variable constraint' which favours the selection of perfective aspect, but this turned out to be a quite inadequate characterization of the situation. First of all, the statistical data of Table I do not indicate any tendency for negation as such to favour perfective aspect, at least if we ignore the case of modern *μπορώ*, to be discussed later. Secondly, it is important to notice that as we formulated our rule it does not say that the imperfective is selected in verbs qualified by expressions

meaning 'always', only that in the logical form of sentences the event they describe will be associated with a universally bound *t*, and this may be the case even when in the surface sentence the adverbial is 'never'. Consider for example (19), culled from a magazine article describing the duties of male geishas in Tokyo.

(19) Μέσα στο συμβόλαιο ποὺ υπογράφουν εἶναι καὶ ὁ ὅρος νὰ μὴ ξεκουμπώνουν ποτέ τὸ σακάκι τους

'In the contract they sign is the condition that they never unbutton their jacket.'

The problem is to explain how the complement clause 'they never unbutton their jacket' comes to have the imperfective *ξεκουμπώνουν*; for *prima facie* the appropriate logical form appears to be as in (20).

(20) NOT (there is a time *t* such that they unbutton their jacket at *t*)

The *t* associated with 'unbutton their jacket' is bound by the existential operator and there is no sign of the presence of a scenario expression in which the unbuttoning is indicated by the antecedent or consequent. A moment's reflection will show, however, that (20) cannot be a correct representation, as what it implies is that the unfortunate subject unbuttons his jacket at no moment whatever in his life, even when in bed or under the shower. Clearly what is required is a formulation indicating that his jacket is not unbuttoned in certain unspecified conditions (e.g. in this case when a female client is present). Thus (22) would be nearer the mark (with *p* standing for these conditions).

(21) NOT (there is a time *t* such that *p* and they unbutton their jacket at *t*)

This formulation itself does not contain an explicit scenario expression, but the ordinary rules of predicate logic convert it readily to one which does contain the required structure (23).

(22) At all times *t* (if *p* at *t* then NOT (they unbutton their jacket at *t*))

Thus what counts is not the presence or absence of negation but rather of a scenario expression, in which the antecedent may be overt or implicit. In (17), for instance, it is overt, being specified

in the words 'when you are blind to the plank in your own'; so that the sense implies a scenario ('whenever you have a plank in your eye you say to your brother "let me take the speck out of your eye"'), and this is within the scope of the modal 'you can'. As an example with implicit antecedent we have *τοὺς δυναμένους κολυμβᾶν* (impf.) (Acts 27:43) 'those who could swim'. General physical abilities are exercised when certain appropriate conditions are present (e.g. here position at the surface of a suitably broad expanse of water). So how then do we account for the fact that the negative form of such sentences indicating ability tends to show perfective complements as in (18)? The reason appears to lie in the fact that while abilities rely for their implementation on the presence of appropriate conditions, lack of ability occurs irrespective of the presence of such conditions as are necessary for the existence of the ability itself. That is, to put it somewhat more formally, if 'I can swim' is expressed as 'POSS at all times t if p at t then I swim at t ', the corresponding negative has rather the sense 'NOT POSS there is a time t such that p and I swim and NOT POSS there is a time t such that NOT- p and I swim', which by the usual rules of logic is equivalent to 'NOT POSS there is a time t such that I swim at t ', a formulation from which no manipulation will derive the scenario expression needed for the selection of imperfective aspect.

Again we should note that what counts is not the presence of negative as such, for it is quite possible for a negated modal predicate to have an imperfective complement provided a scenario expression, covert or overt, comes within the scope of the modal. Thus, while I counted fifteen cases in the New Testament of negative sentences with *ισχύω* + perfective complement (e.g. *οὐδείς ἰσχυσεν αὐτόν δῆσαι* 'no one could bind him', Mark 5:4), there is one instance of the imperfective (23).

- (23) *οκάπτειν* (impf.) *οὐκ ἰσχύω, ἐπατεῖν αἰσχύνομαι* (Luke 16:3)

'I am not able to dig, and too proud to beg.'

Here the first conjunct does not appear to mean that the subject cannot under any circumstances dig, as would be the case under the normal interpretation of 'I cannot swim', but that he cannot dig for a living, so that we have in effect within the scope of a modal a scenario expression with unspecified antecedent representing some such proposition as 'it is working hours'.

4. While the rules governing the surface expression of scenario constructions within the logical forms of Greek have remained in general remarkably stable, shifts are possible in at least two respects. First of all there is evidence that in Hellenistic Greek modal predicates had wide scope in a broader range of cases than is now found. In particular I have found a class of examples involving the negative pronouns 'no one', 'nothing' and the weak modality operators corresponding to 'can', 'may'. One example typical of several in the New Testament is (24).⁵

- (24) *Οὐ δύναται ἄνθρωπος λαμβάνειν οὐδέν, ἐὰν μὴ ἡ δεδομένον αὐτῷ ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ* (John 3:27)
'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him by heaven.'

While 'receive' is in the imperfective aspect in this case, the modern translations select the perfective. The crucial expression would appear to have the logical form in modern Greek of (25).

- (25) NOT there is a person x , a thing y , a time t such that POSS at t (x receive y) and NOT (y is given by heaven at t)

Manipulation according to the usual rules will convert this into a scenario expression but will still leave ' x receives y ' outside the scope of the universal temporal quantifier (26).

- (26) For all persons x , for all things y , at all time t , if NOT (y is given by heaven at t) then NOT POSS at t (x receives y)

For Hellenistic Greek we must place the temporal quantifier within the scope of the modal as in (27), which may then be converted to (28), in which it will be observed that ' x receives y ' is associated with the universally bound t of a scenario expression, and hence realized by imperfective *λαμβάνειν*.

- (27) NOT POSS there is a person x , there is a thing y , there is a time t , such that x receives y at t and NOT (y is given by heaven at t)
(28) NECESSARY for all persons x , for all things y , at all times t , if NOT (y is given by heaven at t) then NOT (x receives y at t)

5. The others are also in John: *οὐδείς γὰρ ταῦτα τὰ σημεῖα δύναται ποιεῖν ἢ σὺ ποιεῖς, ἐὰν μὴ ἡ ὁ Θεὸς μετ' αὐτοῦ* (3:2), *οὐ δύναται ὁ υἱὸς ποιεῖν ἄπ' ἑαυτοῦ οὐδέν, ἐὰν μὴ τι βλέπῃ τὸν πατέρα ποιοῦντα* (5:19), *οὐ δύναμαι ἐγὼ ποιεῖν ἄπ' ἑμαυτοῦ οὐδέν* (5:30), *ἐρχεται νῦν, ὅτε οὐδείς δύναται ἐργάζεσθαι* (9:5), *εἰ μὴ ἦν οὗτος παρὰ Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἠδύνατο ποιεῖν οὐδέν* (9:33), *οὐδείς δύναται ἀρπάξαι ἐκ τῆς χειρὸς τοῦ πατρὸς* (10:29).

It is difficult to know what to say about this class of cases except to point out that it is consonant with a possibly general trend in the development of Greek towards the selection of perfective over imperfective aspect. Thus, three of the cases listed in note 2 above involve the replacement of New Testament imperfectives by translational perfectives where the reference appears to be to impossibility on specific occasions, so that the concept of scenario is not relevant. That complements in these cases indicate events of some duration (*πιστεύειν*, *βαστάζειν*, *ἀντοφθαλμεῖν*) may suggest that lexical aspect (Aktionsart) interacted in Hellenistic Greek more strongly than it does in the modern language with grammatical aspect, although the facts are quite obscure.

In any case it is not easy to accept that one and the same meaning may be associated with different logical forms at different stages in the development of a language, and one obvious way out is to claim that the Hellenistic and Modern versions are not in fact synonymous in so far as the original sentence has a deontic force lacking in the modern translations. For although it would take us too far afield to argue the point, it is possible to see that the deontic predicates such as 'ought' and 'may' are in a sense atemporal, while physical ability may come and go according to external contingencies. This distinction between what we may term 'diffuse' as opposed to 'distributed' modality is represented in logical form by the relative scopes of the modal operators and the *t* variables. When the modal operators precede, as in (28), we have the diffuse modality represented on the surface by imperfective aspect.

Finally let us note an interesting example in which modern translations prefer an imperfective to ancient perfective, contrary to the tendency noted (29).

- (29) Ἐξεστί δοῦναι κῆνσον Καίσαρι; ἢ οὐ (Matt. 22:17, cf. Mark 12:14, Luke 20:22)
'Are we or are we not permitted to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor?'

Taxes represent regularly recurrent afflictions and we expect a logical form showing a scenario expression within the scope of the modal. The general idea being expressed would appear to correspond to, say (30).

- (30) poss at all times *t*, for all *x*, if (*x* is tax and *x* is due) at *t* then we pay *x* at *t*

Curiously enough, however, we find perfective *δοῦναι*. One can only speculate that the Pharisees viewed taxes as we might view unpredictable natural disasters like earthquakes and hurricanes and that their meaning was represented by (31).

- (31) poss there is a time, there is an *x*, such that *x* is tax and *x* is due and we pay *x*

Speculations apart, the basic thesis of this paper has been that the relation between verbal aspect and the semantic distinction single/repeated has on the whole persisted in a remarkably robust and constant manner throughout the history of Greek from the Hellenistic period to the present. If a rule system as subtle and elusive as that of verbal aspect can survive two millennia without benefit of pedantic prescriptivism it is perhaps worth while to consider whether in other and more tangible areas learned tradition has been allowed more credit (or blame) than it deserves.

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The Language of Irony (Towards a Definition of the Poetry of Cavafy)

NASOS VAYENAS

The first time André Gide heard the name of Cavafy was during his visit to Greece, in April 1939. He was talking to Dimaras, Theotokas and Seferis when the conversation turned to the poet of Alexandria. Gide asked what kind of poetry Cavafy wrote. 'Lyrique', Dimaras replied. 'Didactique', corrected Seferis. Later on Dimaras read 'The City' to the group. After the end of the reading Gide turned to Seferis and said: 'Je comprends maintenant ce que vous vouliez dire par le mot didactique...'.¹

Seferis was to change his definition very soon. There is no doubt that Dimaras chose 'The City' as the most representative of Cavafy's poems. This choice and these divergent definitions, by the man who was to become the most important historian of modern Greek literature and by the most important contemporary Greek poet, are characteristic of the confusion of criticism in its dealings with the poetry of Cavafy. Cavafy's unprecedented poetic language posed a complicated problem which could not be solved with the current criteria. How could a man write poetry when his expressive means were those of prose? How could poetry transmit emotion when its language was not emotive, that is, not poetic? The problem proved a fruitful one, for it forced some critics to go beyond psychological, philosophical or sociological interpretations to a

1. George Seferis, *Μέρες, Γ'* (Athens, 1977), p. 116.

closer reading of Cavafy's poetry. The most important results of this closer approach to Cavafy were contributed by, as far as I know, Agras, Nikolareizis, Dallas and Seferis.

For Agras, poetry is of two kinds: 'lyric', and 'dramatic'. Lyric poetry works through what he calls 'Poetic or Lyrical Imagination' – that is by images and music – and is the poetry of form. Didactic poetry, on the other hand, to which the poetry of Cavafy belongs, is the poetry of content and functions through the 'Rhetoric of Dramatic Imagination' (one of the elements of which is tragic irony); that is to say that functions through rhetorical figures of speech (repetitions, digressions, etc.) and – more important – through the use of historical and psychological characters who express the poet's internal tragedy in dramatic form.²

Nikolareizis approaches the problem through a discussion of form. Cavafy, he says, is trying to express reality in its natural objectivity. For this reason the personal intervention in his poems is limited to the minimum. Cavafy's language works by means of this absence which protects his expression from descriptive sensualism. Therefore his lyricism is indirect: instead of describing emotion provoked by an event, he describes only the event. This is why, most of the time, the poet's presence within the poem is eliminated, giving the impression that the impact of the poem is made in a void.³

These two explanations combine in the interpretation by Dallas. Like Nikolareizis, Dallas observes that Cavafy is trying to achieve an objective representation of the world by protecting his expression from the emotional diffusion which his personal intervention would cause. This creates a distance from things, which transforms his poetry into an *ἐποπτεία τῆς φαντασίας*. What Dallas means by this term is not clear. He only says that the *ἐποπτεία τῆς φαντασίας* consists of three expressive monads: the dramatic or lyrical imagination, the rhetoric or spiritual imagination, and the ironic imagination.⁴

Agras's and Nikolareizis's viewpoints combine again in Seferis, who examines the problem from the aspects of both form and content. Seferis returns insistently to the problem

2. Tellos Agras, *Γραμματολογικὰ καὶ ἄλλα, Νέα Ἑστία*, XIV (1933), 759–63.

3. D. Nikolareizis, *Δοκίμια κριτικῆς* (Athens, 1962), pp. 173–8.

4. Yannis Dallas, *Καβάφης καὶ ιστορία* (Athens, 1974), pp. 129–30.

because the poetry of Cavafy seems to threaten the coherence of his own theory of poetry, especially his theory of emotional language. According to this, poetry is the language of emotion and, in order for language to attain its supreme form – that is, in order for it to become poetic – it must become a *sensuous language*. It must be able to make the verses 'give a sense of touch, without necessarily bringing in eros'.⁵ For this to come about, the language and sensibility of the poet must be an indivisible whole, so coordinated that one cannot perceive them separately. Moreover, that language is sensuous which 'gives the expression of a dancing body, a musical expression'.⁶

Until 1941, Seferis was categorical about Cavafy. Cavafy was 'a painter of cool and indifferent Parnassian portraits'.⁷ Not only was his language not sensuous, his themes were remote in history and therefore presumably had no contemporary reference. Nevertheless, the sudden reversal of this opinion shows that Cavafy's poetry must have had a subconscious fascination for Seferis. His unforeseen decoding of one of Cavafy's epigrams – the discovery that the poem 'Those Who Fought for the Achaean League' does not refer to past history but expresses a feeling related to the time just before the Asia Minor Disaster – revealed to Seferis a new Cavafy, a contemporary poet who 'discovered the most concise and intense way of expressing his feelings'.⁸ It was this discovery, for the most part, and the realization that Cavafy's language is more emotional than it appears on the surface, that compelled Seferis to analyse the nature of this poetry. Until the time when he began to take a deeper interest in Cavafy's poetry, it was only in Kalvos that he found instances of non-sensuous verse which sometimes reached the level of poetry: 'Most of the time', he says, 'Kalvos's words are like phantoms. They disperse like leaves. They draw without perspective. They have no shadow. No nap . . . The feeling is behind the words'.⁹ How in these instances Kalvos managed to write poetry remained for Seferis a mystery which he did not consider himself in a position to

5. George Seferis, *Δοκίμια*, 3rd ed., I (Athens, 1974), p. 403.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., p. 330.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p. 62.

explain for years – not until his 'Prologue to an Edition of the *Odes*' (1942). His conclusion is that in these moments Kalvos, for all his dry pedantry, is redeemed by 'the pressure of his great breath'.¹⁰

Seferis's decision to return to the study of the problem of Kalvos's poetry was undoubtedly encouraged by his observance of the same phenomenon in Cavafy. 'Cavafy's language', he writes, 'is either abstract or languidly sentimental or, in its final stage of development, prosaic, without nap. . . . Sensualism, Cavafy's sense of touch, cannot be expressed in his verse. . . . In his good period . . . it is *behind* the expression of his language. . . . The bodies in Cavafy walk, run, wait, or stand motionless or dead. They never dance.'¹¹ Nevertheless, his poetry communicates emotion. It is this contradiction that constitutes the problem of Cavafy's poetry. How does Cavafy succeed in making poetry with the tools of prose, without a sensuous language?

This contradiction is less intense in the *Odes*. One might make the comment that Seferis ought not to have called it a contradiction, because the phenomenon, in his view, is present in Kalvos only in certain of his weaker moments. In most of these moments, the verses are weak precisely because of the discontinuity between sensibility and poetic word. For Seferis, Kalvos's best verses are those where there is no such discontinuity – that is, where his language is sensuous. In Cavafy, however, the problem appears in a different guise. The discontinuity between sensibility and poetic word is apparent in his mature period. Like Kalvos, Cavafy belongs to the learned tradition. In the context of this tradition and his own temperament, he could not produce lyricism. But, writes Seferis, poetry 'could exist in other ways; in the expression of human action, for instance'.¹²

That 'for instance' clearly implies that poetry can exist in other forms than the lyric and the dramatic. What these forms are, Seferis does not say. Most probably, he is referring to the classical division of poetry into epic, lyric and dramatic categories. The affirmation that contemporary poetry which is

10. Ibid., p. 209.

11. Ibid., pp. 403–4.

12. Ibid., p. 347.

not lyric can be dramatic is not a new element in his theory. Ten years previously, in the introduction to his translation of *The Waste Land*, he had written: 'Eliot's poetry is not lyric, like that of Mallarmé or Valéry. . . . It is a poetry essentially dramatic.'¹³ What is new in his essays on Cavafy is that he no longer takes it for granted that poetry (lyric or dramatic) cannot exist unless the language is sensuous. In such instances, what leads the poets in the right direction is the innate word. But in Cavafy, no such thing occurs, so in order to overcome his weakness, Cavafy is obliged to resort to other means, 'to grasp at an external object'.¹⁴

By 'external object' Seferis means Cavafy's use, at an unexpectedly early date, of an 'objective correlative', his main argument for the parallel with Eliot. This mode of expression is imposed upon the poet by his need to objectify his emotion. Eliot stated in his famous dictum that the only way in which one can express emotion artistically is to use a kind of intermediary: 'a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked'.¹⁵ This definition refers mainly to the kind of poetry Eliot wrote, and it would be wrong to extend it to include every kind of poetry, as has been the tendency since its formulation. For, if we were to try to justify it for lyric poetry, we would frequently be compelled to reformulate it. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that it could be used to describe the dramatization of emotion which we find in the 'historical' poems of Cavafy. Those are, for Seferis, his most successful poems, because, through a dramatic enactment of emotion, they achieve a more concise expression and a clearer perspective of events. By contrast, those poems in which Cavafy aspires to a more immediate communication of his feelings are characterized by an annoying languidness of expression. It is with the dramatic enactment of emotion that Cavafy succeeds in transforming his prosaic tools into those of poetry. Thought and elements of analytical expression, which are legion in his best poems, are employed not so much for what they signify but

13. Ibid., p. 38.

14. Ibid., p. 376.

15. T. S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* (London, 1972), p. 145.

rather for creating interactions between men and events such as will produce emotion. Herein lies the difference between Cavafy and Kalvos. Kalvos, Seferis says, 'explains and speaks where he must act';¹⁶ Cavafy acts where he appears to be speaking. His expression does not function in the manner of sensuous language but uses the gestures and mannerisms of the characters he describes. 'Very often in Cavafy', writes Seferis, 'whereas the language is neutral and unmoved, the movement of the characters and events is so dense, so water-tight, I would say, that one has the feeling of one's emotion being dragged out by means of a vacuum. It is this vacuum that makes the difference between Cavafy's sentences and current prose.' 'Sometimes', Seferis continues, 'Cavafy's poems show an emotion similar to that created by a statue which is not on its pedestal. Which was there – we saw it – but now has been removed. Nevertheless, the poems show the emotion.'¹⁷

In reaching this conclusion, Seferis appears to have dealt with one part of the problem, Cavafy's language. He deals with the other part – Cavafy's sensibility – using a description taken again from Eliot (from his essay on the Metaphysical Poets). Cavafy's poetry is also held to communicate emotion because his sensibility functions in a manner similar to John Donne's or George Herbert's: with 'a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, a recreation of thought into feeling'. Seferis explains how he understands Eliot's words: Cavafy 'is thinking in his feeling';¹⁸ 'he feels in his thought'.¹⁹ His language therefore communicates emotion because his sensibility is 'an indissoluble mixture of thought and feeling';²⁰ thus, 'his thought is also expressed by his sensibility'.²¹

Seferis feels that these explanations solve the problem of Cavafy's poetry. But in fact this solution merely bypasses the whole subject, because the above explanations are fundamentally no different from those he employs to describe the manner in which sensuous language creates emotion. The

16. *Δοκίμιες*, I, p. 197.

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 348–9.

18. *Ibid.*, p. 344.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 377.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 431.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 442.

problem is not whether or not Cavafy's thinking is expressed by his sensibility. If it were not, we should have no reason to discuss his verse at all. His poems would be versified thoughts or descriptions, and not true poems. It is how his sensibility manages to express itself completely by means of one aspect which would normally convey only a part of it – the intellectual aspect. To put it another way, how does feeling come to be communicated in a language without 'sensualism'? It is not sufficient to assert that Cavafy's poetry communicates emotion because it is dramatic. That a dramatic manner is not the main element in the creation of emotion in this kind of dramatic poetry (the non-theatrical), and is not on its own enough to produce the emotion required for the language to become poetic, is amply demonstrated by the example of the Greek romantics and certain of Cavafy's own unpublished poems. Moreover, all the examples of dramatic poetry to which Seferis refers are examples of a poetry which communicates emotion not so much through the capacity of its dramatic element but through its linguistic sensualism. Eliot's poetry is dramatic, but the dramatic is only one of the 'three characteristic elements of his technique'.²² For the most part, what makes it poetry is the sensualism of his language, and Eliot's great gift of an 'auditory imagination'. Dante's poetry is also dramatic, but the vision it presents is, as Seferis himself says, 'so much fed by visual, acoustic, or other bodily senses' that it even transforms his abstract thought into tangible objects.²³ Homer's poetry is dramatic, but the sense of touch in his language is even greater than in Dante's.²⁴ There is an essential difference between Cavafy's dramatic language and the dramatic language of the above poets, the same difference which distinguishes his poetry from prose: the vacuum created by his expression.

There is another reason why the comparison of the functioning of Cavafy's poetry with that of the metaphysical poets is a simplification of the problem. Seferis translates the passage from Eliot incorrectly, and in doing so he confuses two processes which do not function in the same way for Eliot. The syntactical arrangement of the clauses in his translation, *μὴ*

22. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

23. *Ibid.*, II, pp. 261–2.

24. *Ibid.*, I, p. 347.

ἀμεση αἰσθησιακὴ σύλληψη τῆς σκέψεως, μὴ ἀνάπλαση τῆς σκέψεως
 σὲ αἶσθημα²⁵ ('a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, a
 recreation of thought into feeling') implies that the latter is an
 elucidation of the former, that these two phrases mean the same
 thing. But 'recreation of thought into feeling' (Cavafy 'feels in
 his thought') is something distinct from the 'sensuous
 apprehension of thought' (Cavafy 'is thinking in his feeling').
 While in the latter case thought and feeling function simul-
 taneously as a direct emotional experience (which, it goes
 without saying, can only be expressed in sensual language), in
 the first instance, emotion is created indirectly; thought comes
 first and is then recreated into feeling (and this, too, cannot exist
 as poetry, whether lyric or dramatic, if the language fails to
 achieve an adequate degree of sensualism). In the original the
 distinction is clear. In the metaphysical poets, writes Eliot,
 'there is a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a
 recreation of thought into feeling'.²⁶ Cavafy functions in the
 latter manner, but this is not enough to justify a comparison
 with the metaphysical poets, because there are no further
 similarities. One could even say that there are no similarities at
 all, because even the recreation of thought into feeling in Cavafy
 does not come about in the same manner. In contradistinction
 to Cavafy's language, the language of the metaphysical poets is
 in this case sensual. These poets, Eliot continues, 'feel their
 thought as immediately as the odour of a rose',²⁷ because 'their
 intellect is immediately at the tips of the senses. Sensation
 became word and the word sensation'.²⁸ In Cavafy nothing of
 the sort takes place, something which, as we have seen, Seferis
 himself stresses: 'Sensualism, Cavafy's sense of touch, cannot be
 recreated in his verse. . . . In his good period . . . it is *behind* the
 expression of his language.'

Thus the source of emotion in Cavafy's poetry must lie
 somewhere else. In my opinion, we would not be wrong in
 looking for it in Cavafy's use of irony.

It is through irony that Cavafy's poetry communicates
 emotion. When Seferis observes that Cavafy's poems drag out

25. Ibid., p. 342.

26. *Selected Essays*, p. 286. The italics are mine.

27. Ibid., p. 287.

28. *The Sacred Wood* (London, 1972), p. 129.

emotion by means of a vacuum he is looking in the right
 direction for the source of that emotion although he does not
 manage to place it exactly. This void is the result of the manner
 in which irony functions. If one considers that the fundamental
 feature of irony is a contradiction between what is apparent and
 what is real, and if one also takes into consideration that the
 largest and most mature part of Cavafy's work is constructed
 upon such contradictions, then the problem of his poetry is not
 beyond solution. Irony drags out emotion by means of a
 vacuum because it functions through an apparent absence—that
 is, through the action of thoughts and feelings which are
 suggested or left incomplete. Certainly irony is a method of
 intellectual perception, but it is nevertheless accompanied by its
 own characteristic feelings and emotions. To a greater or lesser
 extent, it is present in all great writers; it has been said that all
 literature is ironic.²⁹ But in the case of Cavafy, it functions in
 such a manner that we might say that his poetry is written in an
 ironic language.

I mean by the terms 'irony' and 'ironic language' the kind of
 expression which is created by Cavafy's integration of verbal
 and situational irony. With his verbal irony, Cavafy suggests
 meanings and feelings which do not exist in the words he uses,
 and which are different from, or even contradictory to, the
 meanings they express. With his situational irony, he creates
 contradictory states which, by suggesting or revealing the true
 nature of things, demonstrate that his heroes' concepts of reality
 are tragic illusions. Even the presence of imaginary or historical
 characters in his poems, serving to evoke primarily con-
 temporary feelings, amounts to a kind of irony, at once
 verbal and situational. Seferis must have had in mind the result
 of situational irony when he spoke of the dramatic element as
 the source of emotion in Cavafy's expression. The relationship
 between this kind of irony and drama is of prime importance:
 the conflict between contradictory conditions, sudden changes
 of fortune, and hopes unexpectedly dashed, is the stuff of
 dramatic representation. The more intense the human action in

29. Cleanth Brooks believes that all poetry is ironic for the simple reason
 that every element in a poem undergoes a modification of meaning as a result
 of the pressure of its context. See his 'Irony as a Principle of Structure', in
 Morton Zabel, ed., *Literary Opinion in America* (New York, 1951), pp. 729-41.

Cavafy's poems, the more ironic the atmosphere becomes. But what makes Cavafy's irony different from that of other poets is not so much the frequency of his use of situational irony as it is the singular manner in which he combines his verbal and situational irony. The integration of these two elements is so well achieved and the meanings suggested so multifarious, that Cavafy's language functions as a kind of suction device which draws on the reader's emotion with a power comparable to that created by sensual language.

The principal source of irony is the distance created within sensibility between thought and feeling. This is the main reason why the parallel between Cavafy and the metaphysical poets is an unhappy one; the sensibility of the metaphysical poets is a mixture so indissoluble that Eliot invents a new term to characterize all subsequent English poetic sensibility, the term 'dissociation of sensibility'.³⁰ The writer who is aware of such distance often tries to overcome it by bridging the gap with irony. Naturally, the seriousness of this rift is reflected in expression (the example of Cavafy's expression is most apposite). The greater the dissociation of sensibility in a creative artist, the more ironic is his view of the world, and the more ironic his language becomes. Cavafy is, so far as I know, the only example of a contemporary poet whose emotion has irony as its chief source. (An analogous example exists in contemporary prose: Borges. I believe that the similarities between these two writers might be explained, to some extent, by their common esteem for the irony of Gibbon.) Where Cavafy's dissociation comes from need not concern us now. It is sufficient to mention that his irony is a reflection of his way of life; its characteristics, especially irony directed against himself, reveal its romantic origins.

In my opinion, the only way language in poetry can communicate emotion when it does not have an adequate degree of sensuality is through an adequate degree of irony. A notable feature of those of his poems where irony is less to the fore or not present at all is Cavafy's reinforcing of the sensualism of his language with more lyrical words or rhythmic repetition. This directs us to a further train of thought: (1) irony could, in small doses, reinforce the effectiveness of lyrical language; (2)

30. *Selected Essays*, p. 288.

linguistic sensualism, in small doses, could reinforce the effectiveness of ironic language; (3) dramatic poetry (Eliot's for instance) is, in general terms, only a synthesis of equal quantities of lyric and dramatic elements; and (4) verbal irony is the only element in dramatic poetry which can replace the missing linguistic sensualism. But since, in this instance, we have the reinforcement of the dramatic element of dramatic poetry, and, consequently, the reinforcement of its situational irony, thus making this poetry different from that of the dramatic poets I have already mentioned, perhaps it would be better, methodologically, to distinguish this poetry by another name. For this reason, I suggest we could use the expression 'ironic poetry'.

Ironic poetry leads to a kind of poetic catharsis through a process similar to the process found in lyric and dramatic poetry. The last two offer the reader catharsis through the creation within himself of balanced psychological states, which is possible because of the word's emotional load. Ironic poetry leads to the same result through the accumulation of emotions produced by the contradictions created in the simultaneous appeal of verbal and dramatic irony. The means are dissimilar, but the end result is the same. In ironic language, the words function mainly through their intellectual force, and particularly through the force of their suggested appeal. But the fact that they manage to offer a catharsis, that is, an experience that is not only intellectual but also emotional, should not be seen as a paradox. Ironic language offers a catharsis because it expresses emotion condensed into an intellectual expression, but formulated in such a way (the most economical) that, on contact with the reader, it is violently dispersed and drags the reader's emotion along with the force of a maelstrom.

From this point of view, Cavafy is neither lyric nor dramatic: he is an ironic poet. Naturally, this distinction is not made with the intention of baptizing a new poetic genre. It is only intended to highlight the uniqueness of Cavafy's poetic nature, and to contribute to its more precise definition. Of course, the relationship between ironic and dramatic poetry is close. One might compare it with the relationship between metropolis and colony, or between a sovereign state and its satellite which has been conceded a certain degree of autonomy. Although the

citizens of the satellite subscribe to certain laws of their overlords, their behaviour is constrained more by the force of their own habits and customs. Cavafy is not a Roman; he is an Alexandrian. Thus, if ironic poetry was ever to try to win its complete independence, it could not hope to survive unless it observed one fundamental rule – to avoid long poems. Since irony functions through ellipsis and compression, its effectiveness is naturally diminished when the poem goes on at length. This seems to me the reason that Cavafy restricted himself to short poems, at a time when longwinded compositions were still considered essential for great poetry.

Seferis's inability to locate exactly the source of emotion in Cavafy's expression hinders him from perceiving the full range of Cavafy's irony, with the result that he makes serious misinterpretations. Seferis fails to catch the true tone of 'On the Outskirts of Antioch', and believes that the Christians' words about Babylas:

Τὸ πήραμε, τὸ πήγαμε τὸ ἅγιο λείψανον ἄλλοῦ.
Τὸ πήραμε, τὸ πήγαμε ἐν ἀγάπῃ κ' ἐν τιμῇ.³¹

express an absolutely genuine emotion which reflects the poet's feelings. So he concludes that this poem is simply an attack against Julian and that Cavafy is on the side of Babylas and the Christians and against the ancients.³² These lines certainly express an emotion; precisely what kind of emotion, however, is learned only from the fuller context. The subtle contradiction that is created between these verses and the other things the Christians of Antioch say, things that make clear to us the magnitude of their hatred for Julian, makes these lines serve to suggest in the most concise manner the magnitude of the Christians' hypocrisy. For their attitude towards Julian was dictated not by their Christian piety but by their strong distaste for Julian's ascetic version of the ancient worship, the application of which would result in a code of behaviour not unlike that prescribed by Christianity. Following this

31. 'We took it, the holy relic, and carried it elsewhere. / We took it, we carried it in love and in honour.' C. P. Cavafy, *Collected Poems*, tr. E. Keeley and P. Sherrard (London, 1975), p. 152.

32. *Δοκίμης*, I, p. 454.

misinterpretation, Seferis further concludes that the poem 'A Great Procession of Priests and Laymen' is an unfavourable comment on Julian, while in fact Cavafy is poking fun at the Christians. Thus he misses the tone of the last line ('Υπὲρ τοῦ εὐσεβεστάτου Ἰοβιανοῦ εὐχηθῶμεν'),³³ which is one of the finest examples of Cavafy's ironic technique, and, in consequence, he loses the meaning of the whole poem. In Seferis's opinion, this line should be declaimed like a psalm, in the reverent tone appropriate to the prayers of the divine liturgy.³⁴ In fact, the line pokes fun at the Christians' hypocritical piety on seeing the cross after the announcement of Julian's death. Thus it should be read in an ironic tone of voice to call into question the genuineness of the emotion so skilfully created in the preceding lines.³⁵

Nevertheless, it seems curious, when we take into consideration the satirical side of Seferis's temperament, that his failure to perceive all the sides of Cavafy's irony should be due to this one reason to which I have referred. A second reason would seem to be his insistence on looking for as many points of similarity as possible between Cavafy and Eliot, clearly a consequence of his excitement at the discovery of Cavafy's use of the 'objective correlative'. His misinterpretation of the above two poems is surely related to his attempts to find in Cavafy's poetry the theme of the resurrection of the dead god present in *The Waste Land*. Thus the image of the Christian youth dressed in white ('A Great Procession of Priests and Laymen') is to be projected onto the image of the dead Babylas,³⁶ and the two combined are to be correlated with the content of the poem 'Following the Recipe of Ancient Greco-Syrian Magicians', which, Seferis believes, allude to the resurrection of the dead god.³⁷ But this allusion is the result of a specific erotic nostalgia, and to identify it with Eliot's theme seems to me an inadmissible critical liberty; in the same way, his view that the principal

33. 'For most pious Jovian let us give our prayers'. *Collected Poems*, p. 101.

34. *Δοκίμης*, I, p. 454.

35. Cavafy's feelings about Christianity seem to have been so complicated that any unambiguous answer to the question of whether or not he was a Christian would be simplistic. For a survey of the problem, see G. P. Savvidis, *Κ. Π. Καβάφη, Περὶ ἐκκλησίας καὶ θεάτρου* (Athens, 1963), and 'Ἦταν χριστιανὸς ὁ Καβάφης', in Savvidis, *Πάνω νερά* (Athens, 1973), pp. 115–20.

36. *Δοκίμης*, I, p. 456.

37. *Ibid.*, p. 360.

symbols in Cavafy's poetry are those of the dead god and the exhausted Proteus, is a simplification.³⁸ In fact, at the core of Cavafy's poetry we do find the symbol of Proteus, yet with the significance not of Eliot's Fisher King, but rather that of Myrtias ('Dangerous Thoughts'), who is a symbol of disharmony, of the fate of man searching for total fulfilment without ever managing to attain it, because life is nothing more than an ironic juxtaposition of opposites.

The nature of Cavafy's sense of language led him towards a verbal irony, the impact of which could not have been foreseen even by himself. His incomparable mixing of demotic with katharevousa – an ironic combination in itself – makes his verbal irony a powerful means of expression, thus increasing his situational irony. The power of the former nowadays has become intensified, for we have freed ourselves from certain exaggerations and prejudices with regard to demotic purity in poetry, a fact which is largely due to the impact of Cavafy's poetic language.

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38. Ibid., p. 359.

On Seferis' 'Helen'

KATERINA KRIKOS-DAVIS

To Harry

'Helen', a poem based on an ancient legend, belongs to Seferis' collection *Log Book III*; written in 1953, it was published in 1955.¹ Although it has been repeatedly dealt with by critics² there is still room for further discussion. In the present article, after a brief survey of the ancient Greek tradition of the legend that Seferis employed, the following aspects will be considered: the poem's structure, borrowings from relevant ancient Greek sources, the blending of ancient Greek myths with elements drawn from later Greek culture, how Seferis portrays his heroes, the poem's relationship to the Cypriot political situation of the 1950s, and, finally, the ideas expressed in the poem.

1. For Seferis' poetry, the following two editions have been used: George Seferis, *Ποιήματα* (Athens, 1972), and *Collected Poems 1924-1955*, tr. E. Keeley and P. Sherrard (London, 1973). In referring to verses, I have kept the numbering of the Greek edition. Apart from cases where it was essential to quote from the original, all quotations are in translation.

2. See: A. Karandonis, *Ὁ ποιητὴς Γιώργος Σεφέρης*, 4th ed. (Athens, 1976), pp. 172-4, 189-94; G. P. Savidis, *Μία περιδιάβαση*, in *Γιὰ τὸν Σεφέρη* (Athens, 1961), pp. 311-12, 340-7. Some treatment of the poem will also be found in P. D. Mastrodimitris, *Ἡ ἀρχαία παράδοση εἰς τὴν ποίησιν τοῦ Σεφέρη* (Athens, 1964), pp. 18-22; L. Politis, *A History of Modern Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1973), pp. 234-5; M. Dimakis, *Ἡ ποίηση τοῦ Σεφέρη* (Athens, 1974), p. 69; K. Bastias, *Σταμάτησε ἡ καρδιά τοῦ Σεφέρη ἀλλὰ ἐπιβιώνει τὸ ἔργο του, Στὴλη Α'* (Athens, 1972), pp. 95-6; D. Yakos, *Τὴ ἀδόνητα δέ σ' ἀφήνουνε νὰ κοιμηθῆς στὶς Πλάτρες, Στὴλη Β'* (Athens, 1972), pp. 36-8; S. Zannetos, *Σεφέρης καὶ Κύπρος, Στὴλη Β'*, p. 44; M. B. Raizis, 'The poetic manner of George Seferis', *Folia Neohellenica*, II (Amsterdam, 1977), 105-26.

I The ancient Greek tradition

Alongside the orthodox legend according to which Helen's elopement with Paris was the cause of the Trojan War, another story has existed since the sixth century B.C. This developed from Stesichorus' famous 'Palinode'.³ Tradition has it that Stesichorus was struck blind by Helen because he spoke ill of her in one of his poems. He recovered his sight only when he composed a second poem, the 'Palinode', a recantation of the first. In the fragment of the 'Palinode' that has been transmitted to us through Plato, he denies that Helen ever went to Troy.⁴ Moreover, Plato's reference to τὸ τῆς Ἑλένης εἶδωλον ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν Τροίᾳ Στησίχορος φησι γενέσθαι περιμάχητον ἀγνοία τοῦ ἀληθοῦς⁵ suggests that in the 'Palinode' Stesichorus must have also introduced the idea that instead of Helen her phantom image sailed with Paris to Troy. It was this phantom, then, that the Trojan War was fought over, according to the Stesichorean legend, which thus differs significantly from the Homeric one.

In his *Electra*, Euripides made use of this legend; later, in 412 B.C., he based his tragedy *Helen* on it.⁶ Briefly, the plot of this play is as follows: A phantom image of Helen followed Paris to Troy while Helen herself was carried by Hermes to the palace of Proteus, king of Egypt, where, as the play opens, she waits for the end of the Trojan War. Theoclymenus, now king of Egypt after the death of his father Proteus, tries to force her into marrying him. Helen goes and resides by the tomb of Proteus, from whom she seeks protection. Teucer arrives in Egypt and tells her that Troy fell some years ago and that Menelaus is

3. For references to the Stesichorean legend, which coexisted with, but certainly did not overshadow, the Homeric account of the Trojan War, see: Pl. *Phdr.* 243a, R. 9.586c. Isoc. 218bis. D. Chr. 11th Discourse 40-2. Lucianus V. H₂. 15. Suid. *Στησίχορος*. Hor. *Epod.* 17. 38.

4. See: Pl. *Phdr.* 243a.

5. See: Pl. R. 9.586c. The fact that Plato used the Stesichorean legend to illustrate his argument that the unreal pleasures are only εἰδωλα of the true ones shows that he refers to a well known story.

6. A discussion as to whether Euripides' play is a tragedy or not would go beyond the scope of this article. For different views on the matter see: H. C. Baldry, *The Greek Tragic Theatre* (London, 1974), pp. 96-7; A. M. Dale, *Euripides' Helen* (Oxford, 1967); H. D. F. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy* repr. (Norfolk, 1973), pp. 311-29. P. Vellacott, *Irony Drama* (Cambridge, 1975), pp. 127ff. On the whole, I accept Dale's theory that, in the ancient Greek sense, the play is a tragedy.

probably dead. While she is lamenting with the chorus of Spartan women, Menelaus, who has been shipwrecked on a nearby coast, appears on the scene. He has left the phantasmal Helen in a cave under the protection of his men, and has come to the palace to ask for help. He meets Helen, who tells him her story, but he remains confused by the existence of the two Helens and unpersuaded until an old servant of his comes to announce that the Helen they had with them has disappeared into thin air after revealing the truth. Assisted by the priestess Theonoe, Theoclymenus' sister, Helen manages to fool Theoclymenus by presenting Menelaus as a soldier who brought her the news of her husband's death. Pretending that they want to perform a funeral ceremony at sea, Menelaus and Helen escape from Egypt on a ship that Theoclymenus has given them for the ceremony. At the end of the play, the Dioscuri appear *ex machina* and put an end to Theoclymenus' wrath against Theonoe.

When Menelaus' old servant meets his master and Helen, hearing that the gods had cheated them with a νεφέλης ἀγαλμα (705), he asks: νεφέλης ἄρ' ἄλλως εἶχομεν πόνους πέρι; (707) Euripides does not elaborate on this point any further; nevertheless, it appears to have been a source of inspiration for Seferis' 'Helen'. With his feeling for things tragic,⁷ the modern poet chose to use the servant's question as the third part of the epigraph of his poem, which is, by and large, an elaboration of this question and of all the tragic implications it involves. The epigraph's first part, also drawn from Euripides' *Helen* (148-50), is a reference to Teucer's fate after the end of the Trojan War.⁸ In Seferis' poem, Teucer is the sole first-person narrator and it is he, and not Menelaus or the servant, as in the Euripidean tragedy, who finds out from Helen that through deception, the Trojan War was fought for the sake of a νεφέλη.

II The poem's structure

Chronologically, the poem is set after Teucer's arrival in Cyprus, which postdates the Trojan War and his encounter with

7. The best account on this point is to be found in: I. Tsatsou, 'Ο ἀδερφός μου Γιώργος Σεφέρης' (Athens, 1973), pp. 68-70.

8. Another quotation from the same play (E. *Hel.* 582) serves as the second part of the epigraph.

Helen in Egypt. In the peaceful atmosphere of the island, away from the upheaval of the war with its consequences, and away from Egypt, where he discovered the futility of his suffering, Teucer listens to the nightingales. Their song, which brings to him memories from the past, induces him to recollect his painful experiences. Thus, the hero tells his story.

The opening line, 'The nightingales won't let you sleep in Platres', is repeated twice in the course of the poem and serves as a refrain. It can be viewed as the poem's choral part, especially as it is placed in inverted commas. Much of the unified effect of the poem depends upon the frequent return of the nightingale theme. The latter is, in fact, essential to the structure of the poem, since each time Teucer addresses the nightingale he introduces a new subject until, gradually, his identity, story, feelings and thoughts take shape. On this basis, the poem can be viewed as being thematically divided into three parts: (a) Teucer talks about his experience as regards both men and gods, reveals his identity and personal story and, in v. 8, hints, for the first time, at his meeting with Helen. (b) He recalls his encounter with Helen in Egypt, talks of the incredible truth she told him and of the bitter realization that, through being deceived, the Greeks and Trojans warred over a phantom. He stresses the human suffering and ends by putting the following questions, drawn from the Euripidean *Helen* (1137), to the nightingale: 'What is a god? What is not a god? And what is there in between them?' (c) Teucer, by fully universalizing his personal story, implies that tragedies similar to his own are likely to recur among future generations of men.

III *Borrowings from ancient Greek sources*

Seferis' extensive awareness of the past and his knowledge of ancient Greek literature are clearly suggested in 'Helen'. Not only does he base his poem on Euripides' *Helen* and use three quotations from it as his epigraph, but he also alludes to this play, as well as to the other relevant ancient Greek texts, by quoting words and sometimes entire verses from them; moreover, there are other words and verses which, though not identical to ancient Greek ones, certainly recall them. All this indicates that in all probability Seferis had these ancient sources in mind – which is hardly surprising since he happened to meet

T. S. Eliot's requirement that a poet should write 'with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order'.⁹ A list of these words and verses in Seferis' 'Helen', with those corresponding to them in ancient Greek texts, is given in the Appendix.

IV *Blending of ancient and modern elements*

Given Seferis' familiarity with Greek antiquity, the reference to Platres, first occurring in the opening line of 'Helen', may at first sight appear odd in the context of the poem. Platres, the contemporary Cypriot summer resort, is not, to my knowledge, mentioned in the ancient Greek sources; thus, there can have been no connection between it and Teucer. Yet, even if the opening line is viewed as choral and not personal in its emphasis, Teucer's link with Platres is made explicit in v. 10 when he asks: 'Platres: where is Platres?' This reference to Platres in connection with Teucer should be viewed as one of these subtle anachronisms, not uncommon in Seferis' poetry, for which an evident parallel can be found in the poem 'Upon a Foreign Verse', where Odysseus' hands 'knew how to judge the carving of the mermaid at the prow' (23). By associating the ancient Teucer with a contemporary place and by acquainting the Homeric Odysseus with a much later practice, Seferis removes them, to some extent, from their historical reality. The device of distancing particular characters or events from the immediate reality of their times invests them with atemporality and universality. Moreover, the association of Teucer or Odysseus with elements drawn from the rest of Greek tradition is probably a subtle attempt to point to the continuity of Greek culture. This would explain why, when dealing with one period in Greek history, Seferis introduces elements taken from other periods. Thus in a poem like 'Helen', which is based on an ancient legend, he brings in connotations of Greek Orthodoxy by his allusion to a fresco in a church at Asinou in Cyprus (v. 44), and introduces a strong folk element by means of the fine fifteen-syllable opening line which, as already mentioned, is

9. 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', *Selected Essays* (London, 1944), p. 14.

repeated twice in the course of the poem and serves as a refrain. Similarly, in the poem 'Upon a Foreign Verse' he compares Odysseus with the old sailors of Asia Minor who, when Seferis was a child, used to recite to him the seventeenth-century Cretan poem *Erotokritos*.

V *Portrayal of heroes*

In the portrayal of his heroes Seferis has departed significantly from the ancient Greek sources. As in Homer and Euripides, Helen is again a woman of radiant beauty. But whereas Homer presents her as a lonely figure hating her beauty and faced with problems, and Euripides as a gentle and particularly clever, if not cunning, woman, in Seferis she is simply the undeserving victim who protests. Indeed, a fuller portrayal of Helen was not essential to the development of the narration.

Teucer, on the other hand, is a much more fully developed character, tailored to Seferis' own nature and tastes. Teucer is a modest man. Thus, whereas he boasts in the *Iliad* (8.293-9) about his skill as an archer, and in Euripides refers to his *εὐστοχον πτερὸν* (*Hel.* 76), in this poem the best archer of the Trojan War (*Il.* 13.313-14) talks of his excellent skill as if there was nothing exceptional about it: 'I too was an archer in the war' (21). This modest statement is not unlike Seferis' *Εἶμαι ἓνας Ἑλληνας μέσης μορφώσεως*.¹⁰ Moreover, the hero's attitude towards the inevitable can be paralleled with that of Seferis. In the second part of the poem, Teucer relates that when he met Helen in Egypt she revealed to him that the Trojan War was not fought for her but over her phantom image. Faced with this new reality which cannot be altered, he appears to realize that he must resign himself to it. He does not allow himself to lament over it. Referring to the phantom, the unworthy cause of all their troubles, Teucer limits himself to just a brief and, superficially at least, serene statement: 'The gods wanted it so' (39). Though one can feel an internal struggle implicit in this

10. G. Seferis, *Δοκίμες*, 3rd ed., I (Athens, 1974), p. 274. Regarding Teucer's modest statement *Ἦμουν κι ἐγὼ σὶ τὸν πόλεμο τοξότης / τὸ ριζικό μου, ἐνὸς ἀνθρώπου ποὺ ζαστόχησε* (21-22), one might add that the use of the verb *ζαστόχησε* (lit. missed his target; metaph. failed) instead of *ἀπέτυχε*, apart from conveying equally well the essential meaning of failure, allows the best archer in the Trojan War a note of bitter self-sarcasm.

statement, nowhere is there a word about this struggle that preceded and still underlies his acceptance of the inevitable.

This same attitude towards the inevitable is to be found elsewhere in Seferis, whose natural reserve prevents him from lamenting (*Οἱ περιγραφὲς τοῦ ἑαυτοῦ μου μ' ἐνοχλοῦν*, he once wrote),¹¹ and is best illustrated, perhaps, by the last stanza of 'Denial':

With what spirit, what heart,
what desire and passion
we lived our life: a mistake!
So we changed our life.

'A mistake' implies the recognition of the reality, and 'so we changed our life' resignation to the inevitable. The new life, suggested by the last line of this stanza, is the one forced on the 'we' of the poem; it is an unpleasant one since presumably it is without spirit, heart, desire, and passion. Nevertheless, here too there is a complete lack of lamentation. Leaving aside any value judgement, it is their respective attitudes towards the inevitable that seems to be one of the main differences between Seferis and T. S. Eliot, at least the T. S. Eliot of *The Waste Land*. Faced with the reality, Eliot appears to be paralysed: he sinks into mournful depression and laments. Seferis avoids any lamentation; he limits himself to a brief statement and gives the impression that, despite the existence of the painful reality, he continues to operate as best he can.

To return to Teucer: His monologue takes place after his arrival in Cyprus, where he finds himself deprived of everything. 'I moored alone with this fable' (56), he says. His brother is dead; he himself has been faced with the revelation that, having succumbed to deception, he had fought at Troy not for a valid reason but for an illusion; more painful still, having been banished to Cyprus, he has been forced to leave his native island.¹² Thinking back to the Trojan War, he describes the

11. G. Seferis, *Μέρες Γ'*. 16 *Ἀπρίλη 1934-14 Δεκέμβρη 1940* (Athens, 1977), p. 241.

12. The motif of man deprived of everything is not uncommon in Seferis' poetry. See *Ὁ κ. Στράτης Θαλασσινὸς περιγράφει ἓναν ἄνθρωπο*, in *Τετράδιο γυμνασμάτων*, particularly the description of man's adulthood (vv. 19-26), and *Ὁ ἄνθρωπος ποὺ τοῦ ἐκλεψαν τὸν ἱστικιο*, in *Τετράδιο γυμνασμάτων Β'*.

human suffering in the most vivid colours. Unlike the Euripidean Teucer who, when Helen pities the Trojans, is quick to point to the Greek suffering,¹³ Seferis' hero shows sympathy for both Greeks and Trojans. In v. 40 he appears to feel for Paris, who had also been deceived and 'lay with a shadow as though it were a solid being'; and when he says 'for ten whole years we slaughtered each other for Helen' (44), he seems to speak in general without differentiating between Trojans and Greeks. By the end of the poem, this feeling for humanity is further intensified; differences between friend and foe are quite transcended, and both are universalized and elevated into human types as Teucer wonders whether 'in future years some other Teucer / or some Ajax or Priam or Hecuba, / or someone unknown and nameless' (60-2) will not also be fated to suffer through deception.

We saw that Seferis departed from the ancient Greek sources in portraying Helen and Teucer, and that he modelled the latter according to his own tastes and nature. Teucer, here, is very much a Teucer-Seferis. This was natural since it was through Teucer that Seferis chose to express himself and expound his own thoughts. Before dealing with these thoughts, the poem's relationship to the Cypriot struggle for independence in the 1950s must be examined.

VI Relation to Cyprus

'Helen' is one of the poems in *Log Book III*, a collection written in Cyprus and dedicated to it.¹⁴ Cyprus in the wide sense, as the common denominator of all these poems, gives a thematic unity to the collection. *Log Book III* includes poems about the past and present of the island, its landscape and people, as well as a few which, though having no apparent connection with Cyprus, were written there.

In three poems of the collection there are references to the Cypriot political situation of the 1950s: *Στὰ Περίχωρα τῆς Κερύνειας* relates to the social life of the British during this period. In the same poem, Seferis manages to show, very subtly,

13. See: E. *Hel.* 109-10.

14. The original title of this collection was not *Log Book III* but a quotation drawn from Euripides (*Hel.* 148): . . . *Κύπρον, οὐ μ' ἐθέσπισεν* . . . (Athens, 1955).

how alien they are to Cyprus. In *Νεόφυτος ὁ Ἐγκλειστός Μιλᾶ* the Shakespearean verse — *Καλῶς μᾶς ἤρθατε στὴν Κύπρο, ἀρχόντοι. Τράγοι καὶ μαῖμοῦδες* (12) — also seems to be a reference to the British, especially since, according to G. Savidis (op. cit., p. 385), it alludes to the posters that the British Tourist Office published with the statement: 'You are welcome, sir, to Cyprus . . . SHAKESPEARE'.¹⁵ In 'Salamis in Cyprus', one of his most powerful poems, Seferis expresses, allusively perhaps but unmistakably, his anguish about the struggle of the island. Appealing to the 'friends from the other war' (35) and recalling the ideals they all fought for, he expresses his grief that these ideals have not been realized. Yet, some hope about the future emerges by the end of the poem.

In 'Helen', however, there is no such reference either to the Cypriot struggle or to any political or other issue of our time — at least not in the text itself (as opposed to the poet's own footnote). Nevertheless, it appears that Seferis' disillusionment, which manifests itself particularly by the end of the poem, originated in his feelings about the striving of the Cypriots to rid themselves of British rule. This assumption is based on the following external evidence:

'Helen' was written in Cyprus in 1953, a time when the Cypriot struggle had already started. Seferis' attachment to Cyprus, and his concern about the Cypriot struggle are well known facts. With regard to the latter, he has confessed: *"Ὅσο γιὰ μένα, ἄρχισα νὰ νιώθω τὴν ἀποξένωση ἀπὸ τὰ ἐλλάδικὰ κομματικὰ ἀρκετὰ νωρὶς ἀπὸ τὸ τέλος τοῦ κινήματος τοῦ"* 35. *ὑπογραμμίζω τὴ λέξη: κομματικά. Ἀπὸ τότε, μόνο σὲ δύο γεγονότα τῆς ἱστορίας μας δόθηκε ἀλόκληρος, ψυχὴ καὶ σῶμα: στὸν περασμένο πόλεμο καὶ στὸ θέμα τῆς Κύπρου. Καὶ στὰ δύο εἶδα μεγάλα ζυπνήματα καὶ τρύγησα κάμποσες πικρὲς ἐμπειρίες.*¹⁶ Moreover, the poet himself, in a footnote to the last verse of 'Helen', writes: *Ἐφίλος ποὺ διάβασε τὸ χειρόγραφό μου θυμήθηκε τοῦτο: "In those days the official recruiting posters in Cyprus said: Fight for Greece and Liberty"* (House of Commons,

15. *Othello*, IV.i.269. *Στὰ περίχωρα τῆς Κερύνειας* and *Νεόφυτος ὁ Ἐγκλειστός Μιλᾶ* are not included in the Keeley-Sherrard edition of Seferis' poetry.

16. *Δοκιμές*, II, p. 303. See also R. Roufos, *Βραδιά Σεφέρη* (Athens, 1972), p. 58.

Official Report, 5 May 1955'.¹⁷ And indeed, the disillusionment that the last verses of the poem convey corresponds to the general mood current in the 1950s in Greece. There was then a wide-spread, if not universal, feeling that the Greeks and Greek Cypriots who fought in World War II for freedom, democratic ideals and the right of self-determination had been betrayed, since the Cypriots were denied this very right. Viewed in this light, 'Helen' applies only too well to the Cypriot struggle, the unrealized ideals of World War II being now regarded as another *phantom*. This interpretation of the poem was plausibly suggested by A. Karandonis as early as 1956. Yet, it would seem wrong to claim with him that the poem solely expresses *τὴν ἀπογοήτευση, τὴν ὀδύνη τῶν Ἑλλήνων, τὸ βαθύ τους ἀνθρώπινο καὶ φυλετικὸ παράπονο γιὰ τὸ ξεγέλασμά τους ἀπὸ παλαιὸς φίλους καὶ συμμάχους, ἀπὸ τοὺς συντρόφους στὸν παγκόσμιον ἀγώνα γιὰ τὴν ἐλευθερία, γιὰ τὴν ἀνθρωπιά, γιὰ τὴν αὐτοδιάθεση τῶν λαῶν*.¹⁸ It must be admitted that the disillusionment expressed in the poem is not particularized, as it is in 'Salamis in Cyprus'. On the contrary, though originating in a particular political situation, the poem touches on fundamental questions in life and is universal in its implications.

VII *Ideas expressed in the poem*

Because of Teucer's exile, the themes of *πατρίδα* and *ξενιτεία*, often dealt with by Seferis,¹⁹ occur and recur in 'Helen':

Shy nightingale . . .
you who bestow the forest's musical coolness
on the parted bodies, on the souls
of those who know they will not return. (2-5)

and

on sea-kissed Cyprus
consecrated to remind me of my country,
I moored alone with this fable. (54-6)

17. *Ποιήματα*, p. 338. Savidis explains that 'In those days' refers to World War II.

18. Karandonis, *op. cit.*, p. 189. See also p. 174.

19. See: 'Westward the Sea Merges' (*Mythistorema*, no. 7), 'Letter to Mathios Paschalis', 'Upon a Foreign Verse', 'A Word for the Summer', 'The Return of the Exile', 'Last Stop', 'Details on Cyprus'.

'I've lived my life hearing names I've never heard before: / new countries' (11-12) says Teucer, implying that life is full of surprises. That these surprises are often unpleasant ones is suggested by what follows: 'new idiocies of men / or of the gods' (12-13).

Fate, a recurring theme in Seferis,²⁰ is also present here. Teucer defines his own fate as 'that of a man who missed his target' (22) and wonders whether 'it is true that . . . someone unknown and nameless . . . isn't fated to hear' (59-64); he suggests that fate is beyond human control by saying that his fate 'brought' him to Cyprus (16). This idea was first touched on by Seferis as early as 1924. In the following verses from 'Fog' we hear that *ἀλλιῶς ἡ μοίρα τὸ βουλήθη*:

Ἄ! νά 'ταν ἡ ζωὴ μας ἴσια
πῶς θὰ τὴν παίρναμε κατόπι
μ' ἀλλιῶς ἡ μοίρα τὸ βουλήθη
πρέπει νὰ στρίψεις σὲ μιὰ κόχη.

Καὶ ποιά εἶν' ἡ κόχη; Ποιὸς τὴν ξέρει; (25-9)

As the movement of the moon suggests the passing of time, the idea that time changes everything also occurs in 'Helen' when the hero says:

The moon
rose from the sea like Aphrodite
covered the Archer's stars, now moves to find
the heart of Scorpio,²¹ and changes everything (16-19)

Living in a world where life is full of unpleasant surprises, where human fate is fickle and beyond the control of the

20. See: 'Fog', 'Erotikos Logos', 'Mycenae', 'Fires of St. John', 'The Shape of Fate', 'Actors, Middle East', 'Last Stop'. In 'Helen', by means of the verb *κυματίζω* (13), Teucer stresses the fickleness of human fate.

21. Seferis was particularly attracted by Scorpio. In 1944 he wrote. *Προτοῦ κοιμηθῶ, στὸ κατάστρωμα. Οὐρανὸς μὲ πλῆθος ἀστρα καὶ πάντα ὁ μεγαλοπρεπέστατος Σκορπιὸς μὲ τὴ βυσσινιὰ καρδιά του, τὸν Ἀντάρη: Ὁ Σκορπιὸν. Αὐτὸς ὁ ἀστερισμὸς μὲ παρακολουθεῖ (ἢ τὸν παρακολουθῶ) ἀπὸ τὴ Νότιο Ἀφρικὴ: Θά 'πρεπε νὰ γράψω κάτι μὲ τίτλο: Κάτω ἀπὸ τὸν ἀστερισμὸ τοῦ Σκορπιοῦ. See *Μέρες Α'*. 1 Γενάρη 1941-31 Δεκ. 1944 (Athens, 1977), p. 354.*

individual, where time changes everything, Teucer, and through him the poet, asks: 'Truth, where's the truth?' (20) This tragic question is going to be coupled, later in the poem, with three others which are drawn, as noted earlier, from Euripides:

what is a god? What is not a god? And what
is there in between them? (52)

Since they stand here on their own, these questions are more powerful in Seferis' poem than in the Euripidean *Helen*, where they are followed by a piece of didacticism. Questions like these, conveying 'existentialist agony', as L. Politis has put it,²² abound in Seferis' poetry. 'The King of Asine', verse 29 from 'Fog', already quoted, and the following verses from 'The Shape of Fate' (19, 22) are only a few examples:

How did we happen to fall, my friend, into the
pit of fear?

.....
who is he who commands and murders behind our backs?

Apart from touching on these perennial questions in the course of the poem, Seferis handles the particular myth in such a way that he manages to relate it to human affairs in general.

It was suggested earlier that Seferis' Teucer is an atemporal hero. This is implied both by his association with a contemporary Cypriot summer resort, which removes him from his Homeric reality, and by his character, which is quite different from that portrayed by either Homer or Euripides. As he is the protagonist and narrative voice of the poem, his atemporality alone would have been sufficient to give 'Helen' a certain universality. Moreover, by using indefinite pronouns and articles in connection with the Homeric heroes referred to in the poem and also the river Scamander and the phantom of Helen, Seferis elevates everything from the sphere of the particular to that of the universal.²³ This universality is made still clearer by the phrase 'in future years':

22. *A History of Modern Greek Literature* (Oxford, 1973), p. 235.

23. In the cases of κάποιος ἄλλος Τεῦκρος (60), κάποιος Αἰάντας ἢ Πρίαμος ἢ Ἑκάβη (61), the indefinite pronoun elevates Homeric heroes to universal

... if it is true
that in future years some other Teucer,
or some Ajax or Priam or Hecuba ... (59-61)

In this way, the above mythological characters are made to represent not simply the heroes of the *Iliad* or even types of men peculiar to a particular era, but human types belonging equally to the past, present and future. Similarly, the phantom Helen and the river Scamander are made to symbolize concepts valid both in ancient times and in the years to come.

Teucer, Ajax, Priam and Hecuba become the Teucers, Ajaxes, Priams and Hecubas of this world: the people who, through deception, suffered, mourned, saw their lives being destroyed, fought and were killed for the sake of an illusion. They also become those who, again through deception, are suffering now, or will suffer in the future, lured by another illusion. The phantom of Helen symbolizes this illusion and the river Scamander symbolizes the battlefields where purposeless suffering and slaughter take place. Teucer shows this suffering to be still more universal by applying it to yet another human type, not represented by the ones he has already mentioned – 'someone unknown and nameless who nevertheless saw / a Scamander overflow with corpses' (62-3). In the same symbolical language, the gods seem to stand for those forces – whether fate, or 'those with power', or 'he who commands and murders behind our backs',²⁴ or δυνάμεις ποῦ μᾶς ὀρέγονται²⁵ –

human types. Similarly, the indefinite article is used to convert the river Scamander in v. 63 into a universal symbol. The same is true of the phantom of Helen, for the reference to Helen in verses 50 and 68 clearly alludes to her phantom image since it is placed in apposition to those 'airy nothings' – more specifically, 'a linen undulation, a bit of cloud, / a butterfly's flicker, a swan's down / an empty tunic' (48-50) – that stand for the εἶδωλο. Here too, the indefinite article applied to the phantom of Helen makes it a symbol.

24. The quotations are from 'Salamis in Cyprus' (52) and 'The Shape of Fate' (22), respectively.

25. *Μέρες Δ'*, p. 138. Elaborating on the good and evil effects these forces have on men, Seferis continues: Αὐτὲς οἱ ἀνεζήγητες δυνάμεις ποῦ δὲν εἶναι οἱ δικές μας, ποῦ μᾶς παραμονεύουν μέσα ἀπὸ τὸν ὕπνo μας, μέσα ἀπὸ τοῖς τοίχους τῶν σπιτιῶν μας, μέσα ἀπὸ τὰ καθημερινὰ σκευή· ποῦ μᾶς ἀγαποῦν, μᾶς πολεμοῦν, μᾶς βασανίζουν – εἶναι δικές σου, Θεέ μου, ἢ τί νος εἶναι.

which, being beyond the control of the ordinary individual, are responsible for his being deceived.

The poem achieves universal relevance, for it applies to any suffering or strife – whether national or personal – undertaken, through beguilement, for what in the end will prove to be an illusion. Viewed in this light, Seferis' 'Helen' should be seen as dealing with a human failing: man's capacity for deception with all the consequences it involves. Teucer's own story shows that this failing has already occurred and his scepticism suggests that it will not be avoided in the future. For his 'ifs', by the end of the poem, imply his strong doubts about the possibility that men will refrain from fighting and suffering once again for what will eventually turn out to be a phantom. Thus, the tragic tone inherent in a poem dealing with Teucer's story reaches its climax by the last twelve verses, which portend similar tragedies in the future. It is difficult to see any hope emerging by the end of the poem, contrary to what A. Karandonis asserts: *Τὸ ποίημα αὐτό . . . φωτίζεται μολαταῦτα μὲ τὴν ἀμυδρὴν ἐλπίδα μήπως οἱ σύγχρονοι Τεῦκροί δὲν ζανακούσουν πιά πῶς 'τόσος πόνος τόση ζωὴ πῆγαν στὴν ἄβυσσο γιὰ ἓνα πουκάμισο ἀδειανό . . .'*²⁶ But surely, 'the contemporary Teucers who will not hear again that so much suffering, so much life went into the abyss, all for an empty tunic' are beyond the scope of the poem, which clearly deals only with those who have become, or will become, victims of deception. For them there is no hope.

To conclude, the origin of the scepticism and disillusionment apparent in the poem can be traced to Seferis' feelings about the Cypriot struggle of the 1950s in relation to World War II; yet his poetic embodiment of them is such that they relate not just to the Cypriot struggle but to human vicissitudes in general. As a vehicle for conveying his meaning, he makes use of the Stesichorean legend of Helen. Rarely, and only when his needs absolutely dictate it, does he depart from the ancient, particularly the Euripidean, tradition of this legend. Yet – and this makes his poem more arresting still – he shows the story in a different perspective, shifting the emphasis from the plot of the gods and the total misjudgement of the heroes who fought in the Trojan war, which Euripides stresses, to the human tragedy of deception. His poem, then, is atemporal, philosophical in its

²⁶ Karandonis, op. cit., p. 193.

scope, and proves once more that, if treated creatively, the ancient myths abound in universal implications. It deals with fundamental questions in life such as fate, the nature of truth, and the changing of things by time, but primarily with the human capacity for being deceived and all the futile suffering that this involves.

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APPENDIX

Seferis' 'Helen' and the ancient Greek texts

(When no particular scholar is mentioned, the borrowings listed below have not, to my knowledge, been noted before.)

I. G. Savidis (op. cit., pp. 340–1) suggests that Seferis' *Ἀηδόνη ντροπαλὸ* (2), *Ἀηδόνη ποιητάρη* (23), and *Δακρυσμένο Πουλί* (54) refer to Euripides'

σὲ τὰν ἀοιδοτάταν ὄρνιθα μελωδὸν
ἀηδόνα δακρυέεσσαν
(E. *Hel.* 1109–10)

In my opinion, Seferis' borrowing goes beyond this; vv. 2–3 in his 'Helen' and 1107–10 in Euripides' choral part can be paralleled:

Ἀηδόνη ντροπαλό, μὲς στὸν ἀνασασμὸ τῶν φύλλων,
οὐ ποὺ δωρίζεις τὴ μουσικὴ δροσιὰ τοῦ δάσους
(2–3)

cf. σὲ τὰν ἐναύλοις ὑπὸ δένδροκόμοις
μουσεῖα καὶ θάκουσ ἐνίζουσιν ἀναβοάσω,
σὲ τὰν ἀοιδοτάταν ὄρνιθα μελωδὸν
ἀηδόνα δακρυέεσσαν.
(E. *Hel.* 1107–10)

Moreover, it is possible that directly, or indirectly through

Euripides, a Homeric influence can be traced in the above quotations from Seferis' poem:

ὥς δ' ὅτε Πανδαρέου κόρη, χλωρῆς ἀηδῶν,
καλὸν ἀείδῃσιν ἔαρος νέον ἱσταμένοιο,
δενδρέων ἐν πετάλοισι καθεζομένη πυκνοῖσιν,
ἦ τε θαμὰ τρωπῶσα χέει πολυχέα φωνήν,
παῖδ' ὀλοφυρομένη . . .

(*Od.* 19.518–522)

II. Σκλάβα in v. 8, referring to Helen, calls to mind the Euripidean: δούλη καθέστηκ' οὐδ' ἐλευθέρων ἄπο (*E. Hel.* 275).

III. καινούργιες τρέλες τῶν ἀνθρώπων (12). Euripides, referring to men who fight, calls them ἄφρονες (*E. Hel.* 1151).

IV. Αὐτὴ ποὺ κυνηγούσαμε χρόνια στὸ Σκάμαντρο (27).

cf. . . . ὁ δ' ἄθλιος πόσις
στράτευμ' ἀθροίσας τὰς ἐμὰς ἀναρπαγὰς
θηρᾷ πορευθεὶς Ἴλιου πυργώματα.
(*E. Hel.* 49–51)

The choice, in the same context, of the verbs *θηρᾷ* and *κυνηγούσαμε* by Euripides and Seferis, respectively, is significant.

V. Ἄν εἶν' ἀλήθεια, δὲν εἶν' ἀλήθεια φώναζε
Ἄν μπῆκα στὸ γαλαζόπλωρο καράβι
Ποτὲ δὲν πάτησα τὴν ἀντρειωμένη Τροία'
(29–30)

As G. Savidis points out (*op. cit.*, p. 345), the source of this statement by Helen must be the part of Stesichorus' 'Palinode' that has been transmitted to us through Plato:

οὐκ ἔστ' ἔτυμος λόγος οὗτος
οὐδ' ἔβας ἐν νηυσὶν εὐσέλμοις, οὐδ' ἔκεο Πέργαμα Τροίας
(*Pl. Phdr.* 243a)

VI. Τίποτε στὴν Τροία—ἓνα εἶδωλο (38)
References to the εἶδωλο abound in the Euripidean *Helen*; see *E. Hel.* 34, 582, 683, 1136 and also: *E. El.* 1283.

VII. Ἐτσι τὸ θέλαν οἱ θεοὶ (39)

The closest parallel to this verse is to be found in the speech of the Dioscuri:

ἀλλ' ἦσσαν ἦμεν τοῦ πεπρωμένου θ' ἅμα
καὶ τῶν θεῶν, οἷς ταῦτ' ἔδοξεν ᾧδ' ἔχειν.
(*E. Hel.* 1660–1661)

Other parallels referring to the intervention by the gods are as follows: *E. Hel.* 31–7, 119, 261, 584, and 704, as well as the two (*E. Hel.* 610 and 930–1) that Savidis suggests (*op. cit.*, p. 341).

VIII. Κι ὁ Πάρης μ' ἐναν ἰσκιο πλάγιαζε σὰ νά ἦταν
πλάσμα ἀτόφιο (40).

This verse can be compared with:

(a) Ἦρα δὲ
ἐξηνέμωσε τὰ μ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ λέχη,
δίδωσι δ' οὐκ ἔμ' ἀλλ' ὁμοίωσας ἔμοι
εἶδωλον ἔμπνουν οὐρανοῦ ζυνθεῖσ' ἄπο,
Πριάμου τυράννου παιδί· καὶ δοκεῖ μ' ἔχειν—
κενὴν δόκησιν, οὐκ ἔχων. . . .
(*E. Hel.* 31–6)

and

(b) . . . τοὺς Ἀλεξάνδρου γάμους
. . . ψευδονυμφεύτους. . . .
(*E. Hel.* 882–3)

Savidis (*op. cit.*, p. 346) compares this verse with 'Trattando l'ombre come cosa salda' (Dante, *Purgatorio*, XXI, 136.) For a more detailed discussion on the point see: M. Peri, 'Μνήμες Dante', in *Memoria di Seferis* (Florence, 1976) pp. 124–6.

IX. κι ἐμεῖς σφαζόμεσταν γιὰ τὴν Ἑλένη δέκα χρόνια (41).
This verse brings to mind the Homeric formula:

Ἀργεῖην Ἑλένην, ἧς εἶνεκα πολλοὶ Ἀχαιῶν
ἐν Τροίῃ ἀπόλοντο . . .
(*Il.* 2. 161–2)

The same formula is repeated in: Hom. *Il.* 2. 177–8.

X. *τόσες ψυχές*

δοσμένες στίς μυλόπετρες, σὰν τὸ σιτάρι (45–6).

The reference to *ψυχές* in this context vaguely recalls the Euripidean verses:

*ψυχαὶ δὲ πολλαὶ δι' ἔμ' ἐπὶ Σκαμανδρίοις
ροαῖσιν ἔθανον·*

(E. *Hel.* 52–3)

XI. . . . *γὰρ μιὰ νεφέλη* (48).

It is noteworthy that Seferis uses the Euripidean word *νεφέλη*, rather than the more common *σύννεφο*, to indicate the phantom of Helen. Cf. E. *Hel.* 705, 707, 1219.

XII. . . . *τὸ πούπουλο ἐνὸς κύκνου* (49).

G. Savidis (op. cit., p. 341) compares this with:

*... ὅτε σ' ἐτέκετο ματρώθεν
χιονόχρως κύκνου πτερῶ.*

(E. *Hel.* 214–15)

I think that Seferis may also have had in mind the passage below:

*... διὰ τὸ τᾶς
ὀρνιθόγονον ὄμμα κυκνόπτερον
καλλοσύνας, Λήδας σκύμνου, δυσελένας,*
(E. *Or.* 1385–7)

XIII. *γὰρ ἓνα πουκάμισο ἀδειανὸ* (50 and 68) is reminiscent of verses 584 and 590 in Euripides, where Helen explains to Menelaus that her phantom image was made by:

αἰθήρ, ὅθεν σὺ θεοπόνητ' ἔχεις λέχη
(E. *Hel.* 584)

and refers to the phantom as:

... κεν[ὰ] . . . λέχη
(E. *Hel.* 590)

XIV. *τ' εἶναι θεός; τί μὴ θεός; καὶ τί τ' ἀνάμεσό τους;* (51)

As G. Savidis suggests (op. cit., p. 341), the reference here is to:

ὅτι θεὸς ἢ μὴ θεὸς ἢ τὸ μέσον
(E. *Hel.* 1137)

XV. . . . *στὴν Κύπρο τῇ θαλασσοφίλῃ τῃ
ποῦ ἔταξαν γὰρ νὰ μοῦ θυμίζει τὴν πατρίδα* (54–5).

These verses contain obvious echoes of:

*ἔς γῆν ἐναλίαν Κύπρον, οὗ μ' ἐθέσπισεν
οἰκεῖν Ἀπόλλων, ὄνομα νησιωτικὸν
Σαλαμίνα θέμενον τῆς ἐκεῖ χάριν πάτρας.*
(E. *Hel.* 148–50)

XVI. *τὸν παλιὸ δόλο τῶν θεῶν* (59)

The following verses from Euripides also point to this deceit of the gods:

*ὅστις . . .
πρὸς θεῶν κακοῦται . . .*
(E. *Hel.* 267–8)

... πρὸς θεῶν δ' ἤμεν ἠπατημένοι.
(E. *Hel.* 704)

XVII. Lastly, Scamander overflowing with corpses (v. 63) and the rivers swelling blood in their silt (v. 47) bring to mind the Homeric descriptions:

*πολλοὶ γὰρ τεθνᾶσι κάρη κομόωντες Ἀχαιοί,
τῶν νῦν αἶμα κελαινὸν εὐρροὸν ἀμφὶ Σκάμανδρον
ἐσκέδασ' ὄξυς Ἄρης, . . .*
(*Il.* 7.328–30)

*ὄχθας παρ ποταμοῖο Σκαμάνδρου, τῇ ῥα μάλιστα
ἀνδρῶν πίπτε κάρηνα . . .*
(*Il.* 11.499–500)

Ῥῆσός θ' Ἐπτάπορος τε Κάρησός τε Ῥοδῖος τε
Γρήνικός τε καὶ Αἴσηπος δῖός τε Σκάμανδρος
καὶ Σιμόεις, ὅθι πολλὰ βοάγρια καὶ τρυφάλειαι
κάππεσον ἐν κονίησι καὶ ἡμιθέων γένος ἀνδρῶν.
(Il. 12.20-3)

... ὁ δ' ἄρα πρηνὴς ἐπὶ γαίῃ
κεῖτο ταθείς, ἐκ δ' αἶμα μέλαν ῥέε, δεῦε δὲ γαῖαν.
τὸν δ' Ἀχιλεὺς ποταμόνδε λαβὼν ποδὸς ἤκε φέρεσθαι,
καὶ οἱ ἐπευχόμενος ἔπεα πτερόεντ' ἀγόρευεν·
Ἐνταυθοῖ νῦν κείσο μέτ' ἰχθύσιν, οἷσ' ὠτειλὴν
αἶμ ἀπολιχμήσονται ἀκηδέες· οὐδέ σε μήτηρ
ἐνθεμένη λεχέεσσι γοήσεται, ἀλλὰ Σκάμανδρος
οἴσει δινήεις εἶσω ἄλός εὐρέα κόλπον.
(Il. 21.118-25)

Symbolism and Irony in Three Novels by Kosmas Politis

PETER MACKRIDGE

In a recent book, Mario Vitti has described Kosmas Politis as 'emotionally the most highly charged novelist' of the Generation of 1930.¹ Vitti also points out that *Eroica* is 'compositely organized down to the minutest detail', despite the author's assertion that he wrote each instalment 'on the presses'.² In an attempt to account for the 'magical', 'poetic' quality of Politis' writing as pointed out by Greek critics,³ Vitti investigates Politis' use of irony and of the interior monologue. My purpose in this article is to examine further Politis' ironical approach and to make some preliminary remarks about his use of symbols and imagery (a subject on which far more work has to be done), in the hope that, in so doing, I shall shed some light on the 'emotionally charged' and 'highly organized' nature of Politis' writing.⁴ For reasons of space and time I must confine myself to his first three novels, *Lemonodasos* (1930), *Hekate* (1933) and *Eroica* (1937).⁵

1. M. Vitti, *Ἡ Γενιά τοῦ Τριάντα. Ἰδεολογία καὶ μορφή* (Athens, 1977), p. 235.

2. Ibid., p. 335.

3. Ibid., pp. 329-30.

4. The ideas contained in this article have as their starting point my D.Phil. thesis, *The Development of the Greek Novel 1922-1940*, presented to Oxford in 1972. In view of the appearance in the meantime of Vitti's book I shall attempt to avoid duplicating what he says. I refer the reader especially to his valuable section on Politis (*Συγκινησιακὸς παράγοντας καὶ προοπτικὴ στὸν Κ. Πολίτη*, op. cit., pp. 324-42).

5. Page references to *Lemonodasos* and *Hekate* are made to the first editions. *Eroica* appeared in book form in 1938. It was, however, first published in

I Symbolism in Hekate

Let us first look very briefly at Politis' symbolism. Here I shall concentrate on *Hekate* and *Eroica*, since *Lemonodasos* does not have as rich a symbolic structure as the other two novels.

The recurrent symbolism in *Hekate* is provided by images of the moon. Hekate (which is not the name of a character in the novel) is referred to as a moon-goddess and as the guardian of Hades, haunting the crossroads with her retinue of dogs. In ancient mythology, Hekate was a virgin goddess who had the power of giving or withholding any gift desired by mortals; in Politis' novel she is seen as being an apotheosis of woman: tantalizing, full of promise, but utterly incapable of being fully comprehended and possessed by man.

The name of Hekate as the force which controls the terrible moon is first invoked by the comic latter-day alchemist Venieris, while he is on his drunken way home from Kifisia to Athens expounding to Kalanis his views on love and creation, he hears some dogs barking, and exclaims:

The moon, trisubstantial Hekate, the guardian of the cone of Erebos. . . . Can you hear? The foul spirits of her followers are barking. (p. 41)⁶

Later, on Paros, Venieris mentions her again as guarding the gates of Hades when he quotes from Euripides' *Helen* (l. 569):

O light-bringing Hekate, send benevolent shades . . . (p. 76)

Along with references to Hekate's name, the moon appears in the story at several critical junctures, its aspect either reflecting the situation and the feelings of the characters, or even actually influencing them. As Kalanis walks with the three women on the beach at Aegina, the moon constantly appears (pp. 60ff.), its presence becoming more insistent when he invites Athena to

instalments in *Néa Γράμματα*, III (1937). References are made both to this first publication and to the current edition (4th ed., Athens, n.d.).

6. Compare Theocritus, *Idylls* 2, 35-6: *Θεστολή, τὰ κύνες ἄμυν ἀνὰ πτόλι ὠρύονται / ἃ θεὸς ἐν τριόδοισι*. Venieris' exclamation is echoed in Pavlos' words on p. 376: 'I want to liberate myself [. . .] from the cone of Erebos, which is guarded by Hekate.'

come to Paros with him (p. 70). This is his first attempt to find the woman who, according to Venieris, will spur him on to creation. As Kalanis leaves Paros by boat at the close of the first part of the novel, the muleteer indicates his belief in the moon's influence when he informs his passengers:

'Upright moon means sleeping captain [. . .]
You'll have a good journey.' (p. 128)

The cold daytime moon saddens Leia on the drive to Sounion just before she sleeps with Kalanis for the first time (pp. 141-2), while the moon is happy and laughing when he leaves Ersi's house after his first visit to her on his own (p. 200). When Kalanis encounters Leia and Ersi at the bookshop, he notices a crescent-shaped hole in the girl's stocking (p. 209), symbolizing Ersi's intimate connection with Hekate. After Kalanis and Athena have slept together for the first and only time, a customer at the tavern points out that the ring around the moon has grown larger (p. 227): Kalanis has extended the range of his amorous activities, and consequently of his metaphysical experience. The moon is full and bright when Kalanis goes to Katapoliani at night, and it lights the whole dreamlike scene (pp. 263ff.), while it is again prominent as Kalanis wanders about aimlessly after his disastrous quarrel with Leia (pp. 291ff.).⁷ Later, Kalanis addresses a monologue to the moon and to Ersi across the street when he is sitting outside a tavern in Plaka (pp. 336ff.). And in his mountain retreat, Kalanis asks, quoting Theocritus (*Idylls*, 2.69): 'Know whence love has come, Queen Moon.' (p. 345)

When we consider that the moon is referred to over sixty times in *Hekate*, it is perhaps surprising that the reader is not bothered by this repetition. However, with the exception of certain scenes in which the moon's presence is more insistent, Politis refers to it as if in passing, so that it does not usually intrude on the reader's consciousness: rather, the moon's presence acts subconsciously on the reader, regulating his emotional response to the novel.

II Symbolism in Eroica

The central theme of *Eroica* is the end of childhood innocence

7. Dogs are barking during both scenes (pp. 264 and 291-2).

brought about by the first painful encounter with adult reality.⁸ This manifests itself first in Andreas' death at the very beginning of the book, and secondly in the boys' love for Monica later on. It is significant that Andreas' fatal accident and the boys' first encounter with Monica occur on the same day. Death and love (the latter in both its spiritual and its physical form) combine to wrench the boys cruelly out of innocence and into experience.

The death of Andreas, one of the leaders of the gang, was for the boys, as the narrator puts it, 'a diminution of the idea of immortality' (p. 653/204). Hitherto, they had thought that their games could last for ever. This new realization, which results in Loizos' flight, Monica's and Alekos' first experience of physical love and the latter's death, is symbolized at several points in the book by means of images of carnival, dressing up and play acting.

At the beginning the young 'heroes' are pictured wearing their rather ridiculous helmets made of oil-cans which they regard as an indispensable concomitant of heroism.⁹ When Loizos loses his helmet over the consul's wall, he and Alekos climb over into the garden, where they first meet Monica. They

8. It has been pointed out by several critics that *Eroica* owes much to *Le Grand Meaulnes* by Alain-Fournier, and both A. Sachinis (*Η σύγχρονη πεζογραφία μας*, 2nd ed. [Athens, 1971], p. 18) and Vitti (op. cit., p. 341n.) believe that it surpasses its predecessor. The similarities are in fact striking: the painful wrench from adolescent make-believe to adult reality; the schoolboys and their gang; the *fête* and the *bal masqué*, in both of which there appear pierrots and harlequins; the *domaine secret* and the secret garden, both of which are physically destroyed; the escape of Frantz and Meaulnes in *Meaulnes* and of Loizos in *Eroica*, etc. Even the narrators in both novels have some similarities: they are younger than the chief characters; they act as go-betweens; and each of them is secretly in love with one of the girls. It would, however, be instructive to examine further the differences which distinguish the two novels: the style of *Meaulnes* is too realistic for the characters and plot; there is no interior monologue; the plot is artificially extended in a paratactic manner, whereas that of *Eroica* develops organically with a complexity of self-reference, moving inexorably towards its climax (the action of *Meaulnes* covers four years, while that of *Eroica* lasts seven weeks); the atmosphere of *Meaulnes* (especially in its later chapters) is steeped in a rather oppressive melancholy which is absent from the more exuberant *Eroica*; and, finally, *Meaulnes* lacks the irony which lends *Eroica* much of its excitement.

9. The echoes of the *Iliad* in *Eroica* and Politis' view of heroism as shown in the novel have been well enough covered by the critics to allow me to ignore them in this article.

are so absorbed by this new acquaintance that Loizos forgets to retrieve his helmet and Alekos leaves his in Monica's house. It is precisely while their 'heroism' is thus being undermined by the charm of the young girl that Andreas falls and receives his fatal injury.

The old life begins to show signs of disintegration at the Montecuculis' masked ball, after Andreas' death: the whole novel takes place during Carnival and Lent.¹⁰ The house is full of Harlequins, Pierrots and other costumed figures. An indication of the change in the circumstances of the boys' lives comes when, after a pantomime has ended in a fiasco, Monica's brother Gaetano, dressed in a monk's habit, ineffectually protests, '*La comedia [sic] non è finita*' (p. 81/73); he is not only trying to reverse Pagliacci's cry, but also preparing the way for the end of the comedy which the boys are acting out in their lives. After the boys find that Loizos has run away, Monica blurts out, 'I was mad. . . . It's the end, the holiday's over. *Poco dura la festa dei matti*' (p. 528/197); these words, in paraphrase, are reported later by Alekos to Loizos himself (pp. 663-4/217). Similarly, when the ghost of the adventurer Uncle Andronikos appears masked in the guise of the red tom-cat to mock and destroy all Alekos' old ideals, the boy shouts at him, 'You joker! The carnival's over' (p. 668/223).¹¹ Meanwhile Loizos has gone off with the troupe of travelling players, thus indicating his refusal to face up to the new situation, that is, to ordinary everyday life: Loizos is determined to continue his adventures and not to become an adult. On the other hand, it may be that acting and dressing up constitute the deeper reality and that

10. The time setting of the novel is fixed quite specifically throughout the novel without a date ever being explicitly mentioned. There does seem to be one discrepancy, however: there are indications that the action begins on Saturday, 2 February (see p. 8/12), which will have to be altered to 5 February to fit in with the rest. Thus the first ball takes place on 12 February, the games on 17 February (*Τοικνοπέμπτη*), the excursion to Defkalia on Sunday, 6 March, and the second ball on Friday, 25 March. The action does not take us up to Easter (17 April): there is no Resurrection. If we remember that the dates are given according to the Old Calendar (the action takes place about 1900), the coming of spring in the novel does not seem premature.

11. At one point, Andronikos advises Alekos: '*Νὰ ζεῖς καὶ ἐντατικά! ἰδοὺ ἡ ἐκρυτα!*', making a play on the first line of Hamlet's famous soliloquy as it is traditionally translated into Greek. Alekos replies innocently: 'You're talking like the actor who was reciting at the inn.' (p. 669/224).

ordinary adult life is a sham. Politis makes a continual play between dream, imagination and ideal on the one hand, and 'reality' on the other,¹² and this is where symbolism and irony meet.

Before concluding, some more should be said about Uncle Andronikos and the red tom-cat. Evidence of the tight structure of *Eroica* is provided by the appearance throughout the novel of this tom-cat (and occasionally other cats too); this cat, one of the causes of Alekos' death (which is more inevitable than accidental, since it is so often prefigured in the novel),¹³ first appears right at the beginning of the novel (p. 7/10). For the puritanical Gaetano, who is the cat's greatest enemy, it seems to represent male promiscuity, and it is certainly connected with the painful realities of sex that the adolescents are beginning to be conscious of. Alekos' Uncle Andronikos¹⁴ came to a notorious end: he was found dead with a woman in his arms, apparently frozen to death during the act of sex. Andronikos' temporary identification with the tom-cat during Alekos' dream (pp. 668-70/222-5) helps to elucidate the significance of both these symbolic creatures. Just as the cat represents inconsequential and guiltless sexual activity, Andronikos represents the importance of sexual ecstasy as a taste of immortality and a prefiguration of 'easeful death' (εύθανασία).¹⁵

12. There are many other references to the boys' uniforms and to dressing up throughout the book (using words such as *μασκάρεμα*, *μασκεράτα*, *μασκαράς*, *ἀπόκριες*, *πανηγύρι*). It is significant that the invitations to the second ball at the Montecuculis' residence on the night of Alekos' death specify 'toilette de ville' (p. 726/239) in contrast to the 'bal masqué' six weeks previously.

13. There is a certain fatalism here, as there is in *Hekate*. There is the precedent of the death of Alekos' uncle during or after making love, and Gaetano's confession to Alekos of his 'sin', which was to crush some ants to death as they were enjoying the lump of sugar which he had laid down as bait: 'Έτσι, πάνω στη γλύκα', as he puts it (p. 191/86). There is, more obviously, Gaetano's passionate determination to shoot the tom-cat (which seems to bear some subconscious relation to the 'sin' for which he is atoning); Alekos' unease when Gaetano first shows him the gun (pp. 189-90/83); Gaetano's near-miss; and many other prefigurations of Alekos' end.

14. There are indications that Alekos believes himself to be a reincarnation of Andronikos (see his interest in metempsychosis, pp. 656/208), and Alekos seems to remind his mother of his uncle (p. 104/54).

15. In *Hekate*, a fisherman tells a story of a frog dying while mating; Kalanis calls this 'εύθανασία' (p. 95). Later in the novel (p. 264), Kalanis recalls that Eros and Thanatos are twin brothers.

Through these very sketchy remarks about the recurrent symbolism in Politis' novels I have attempted to give some idea of the symbolic structure of the novels, which constitutes their warp, so to speak, while the weft is provided by their ironic structure. Suffice it to say that the recurrent symbolism serves the following purposes: to lend to Politis' novels a 'mysterious' element which fascinates the reader with its far-reaching resonances; to reinforce the psychological, philosophical and spiritual content of the novels; and to help in producing the organic quality of his writing.

III The ironic approach to writing

If Politis' symbolism presents the positive thesis, then his irony presents the apparently negative antithesis, and the combination of the two creates the special synthesis which has led critics to talk of the 'magical' quality of his writing.

In order to examine Politis' use of irony, it is worth while looking at the image of himself which he presented in public. Politis' few interviews to the press are most revealing in this respect. In 1938, after his rise to fame with the publication of *Eroica*, he gave two interviews. In one of them, talking of his attitude to writing, he said, 'I just scribble a few things every so often to kill time', and he described himself, referring to Molière's M. Jourdain, as 'a kind of *bourgeois gentilhomme* who found out rather late in life that he had been speaking in prose'¹⁶ (he was by then fifty years old). In the other interview, asked about his attitude to art, he replied:

Art? But art is a game to amuse others. And then a writer is nothing but a jester, a clown of joy – or of pain, if you like; it makes no difference.

And when the interviewer asked him whether his turn towards art was the result of an inner need, a plethoric outburst of life, Politis answered, 'No [. . .] Premature senility.'¹⁷

In a more recent interview Politis talked more frankly about his work, stating a creed which confirms the conclusions one may draw from the books themselves, and also indicating the

16. Reply to a questionnaire published in *Μακεδονικές Ημέρες*, VI (1938), no. 1, pp. 12-13.

17. Interview published in *Νεοελληνικά Γράμματα*, 28 May 1939, p. 12.

profound earnestness of his intentions. Having said that he never planned out his novels in advance, he continued:

At bottom, I feel I am an amateur writer, and I consider that to be bad. On the other hand, most 'professional' writers (if indeed it is a profession!) have one basic drawback: they claim to believe in the spirituality of the writer, whereas in fact we are all materialists. As for me, if I have to believe in a lie, I prefer to believe in irony, in the concealment of the truth by means of irony and, above all, self-irony.¹⁸

Similar statements are made by some of Politis' characters. At the beginning of *Lemonodasos*, Apostolou, the narrator, writes that 'writers are a race of idlers' (p. 4), and there are many similar statements in *Hekate*. Yannis Pendelitis, Kalanis' best friend, tells a bookseller:

Anyone who writes must face the fact that his role is to amuse the reader – a kind of jester or clown of joy and pain. (p. 208)

Kalanis himself – it is significant that both he and Pendelitis describe themselves as 'amateurs' (pp. 38 and 378) – comments how unusual it is for him to be reading ancient Greek poetry in his mountain retreat (p. 344), and laments the fact that his sentimentality has turned him from a creative being into a poet (p. 349). The narrator of *Hekate* recounts his meeting with Pendelitis and their conversation on the subject of Kalanis, but hastens to add:

Of course I did not tell him I had written a kind of novel: I wanted to preserve my reputation. (p. 372)

And in *Eroica*, the narrator, Paraskevas, asks at one point, in English: 'What's the use of writing?' (p. 453/160) Such statements, I believe, reveal the personality of a writer who is at times profoundly idealistic and absolutely self-confident about his work, and at times embarrassed about indulging in an activity that is not taken seriously by those around him. This

18. Interview with G. P. Savidis, published in K. Politis, *Στοιχὸν Χατζηφράγκου* (Athens, 1963), p. ix.

ambivalence is apparent in the way in which Politis handles his characters.

IV *The ironic treatment of character*

First of all, Politis' choice of narrators is significant. Pavlos Apostolou, the narrator and main character of *Lemonodasos*, is a twenty-six-year-old architect who is well experienced in the ways of the world and quite confident that he has all his problems sorted out. He begins his narration thus:

No changes have ever occurred in my life. I do not know why I am in the mood tonight to see my thoughts laid down on paper. I feel no inclination towards literature, and I am not in love. Love? Someone said it is an invention which everyone considers his own. I am not an inventor: I am an architect, a down-to-earth person. (p. 3)

The whole novel demonstrates that he is deceiving himself: he is finally destroyed by a consuming love for a girl whom he makes into an ideal.

Pavlos Kalanis, in *Hekate*, is a forty-year-old electrical engineer with a wife and children. He sees himself as a materialist, whereas he is passionately interested in spiritual and even metaphysical matters: it is love that exposes his true nature too. Both Apostolou and Kalanis are 'intellectual heroes', and their idealism is lightly mocked by the author. The narrator of *Hekate* is not Kalanis but an anonymous lawyer who plays no part in the action – he has never even met Kalanis – and professes not to understand fully the main character's psychology and motivation. The character who narrates *Eroica* is Paraskevas, a comparatively insignificant member of the group of boys whose story the novel tells; in fact, it seems that he is tolerated as a member of the gang chiefly because of his skill at maintaining the fire-pump which they use in their 'heroic' exploits.

The narrators of all three novels, then, and the chief characters of two of them, are practical men whose involvement in the spiritual adventures narrated in these books seems incongruous. The incongruity is of course intended: Politis employs characters who are scientists precisely because he is

interested in a non-scientific view of the world. Being an ironist rather than a lyricist, he does not, as Sikelianos does for instance, put forward his ideas with an implicit belief in their truth, but rather suggests these ideas tentatively, always allowing for a contrary possibility. His all-pervading use of irony, which no doubt springs from his own personal attitude to the world, is a fictional device *par excellence*. D. C. Muecke would seem to concur here when he says that the purpose of irony is partly

to show that one has earned the right to an opinion by showing that one is aware of its potentially destructive opposite. In the discussions of this kind of irony [the juxtaposition of different points of view] there is much that calls to mind the phenomenon of protective colouring familiar to the entomologist.¹⁹

Politis' novels (and especially *Hekate*) are full of dualisms such as matter/spirit, science/mysticism, sex/ideal love, fragmentation/wholeness, and so on. In fact, Politis, through his characters, attempts to express at one and the same time both a spiritual and a scientific view of the world. What Pavlos Kalanis – and Politis – are trying to do is to unite these opposites, and the ironical treatment of Kalanis as dedicated idealist from one point of view and Don Juan from another is integral to this effort. Politis channels his own spiritual outlook and his tendency towards sentimentality by objectivizing them through irony. This technique – the combination of symbolism and irony – produces a great tension and intensity in his work, since he has found a delicate balance between the opposing forces of sentiment and intellect.

The bulk of *Lemonodasos* is taken up by a journal kept by Apostolou, who, despite his claim to be an ordinary man of routine, is in fact searching for an ideal love. Thus the narrator has some misconceptions about himself. At the end of the book there is an epilogue, the narrator of which is a lawyer friend of Apostolou's who explains how Apostolou's journal came into his hands. The lawyer relates that after the failure of his love-affair with Virgo, Apostolou had gone to Sumatra to witness a total eclipse of the sun, still searching for the ideal vision which

19. D. C. Muecke, *Irony* (London, 1970), p. 24.

he had thought to be embodied in Virgo. There he stayed, married a tart named Virginia (because of her name?) and committed suicide after learning of Virgo's marriage. The manuscript was brought to Athens by a Greek seaman who had put in at Sumatra. The matter-of-fact tone of this epilogue, which tells of rather preposterous ideas and actions, clearly indicates that the down-to-earth lawyer-narrator has little comprehension of what has been going on in Apostolou's mind. The cynical words of the old sailor who tells the narrator of Apostolou's life and death in Sumatra heighten the impression that the author is trying to wash his hands of responsibility for his character's actions. But although the epilogue implies that perhaps Apostolou is just a crazy idealist, the sentimentality of the rest of the novel is not well enough controlled, and the reader is obviously meant to take Apostolou fairly seriously – even though, with Politis, one is never quite sure how to take things.

The irony is handled with greater expertise in *Hekate*, a more ambitious book which treats some of the same themes as *Lemonodasos*. The whole of *Hekate* is narrated by a lawyer who has received from Pavlos Kalanis a confession of moral responsibility for the suicide of a girl. Kalanis had disappeared immediately after sending his confession, so that the lawyer had put the document away in a drawer, intending to look at it again when he was less busy. When he eventually took the document up again, he found it so fascinating that he set about reconstructing Kalanis' story for his own amusement (like Politis himself, he claims to have no serious intentions), using the 'confession' as his basis and complementing it with (a) entries in a journal kept by Kalanis, (b) Kalanis' correspondence with the girl, Ersi, and (c) the lawyer's conversations with Kalanis' best friend, Yannis Pendelitis, whom he had the good fortune to meet and who made him all the more interested in the case.

The reader is not, however, given to suspect that there is any other narrator than the author himself until he nears the end of the book. The novel proper, like *Lemonodasos*, is a straightforward account of the hero's spiritual progress told without obvious irony. While in *Lemonodasos* the narration is in the first person, in *Hekate* it is in the third: so that, until the

epilogue, the reader is given the impression that it is the author himself who is telling the story directly, without resorting to an intermediary narrator. But the lawyer-narrator introduces himself in the epilogue (p. 366, although a first person is surreptitiously inserted as early as p. 340), in which he explains to the reader how he pieced the story together, embellishing it with as little as possible from his imagination but confessing that, down-to-earth as he is, he cannot make head or tail of Kalanis' character. Until the epilogue, the story appears to have been told by a sympathetic but objective narrator; but, after relating his meeting with Yannis Pendelitis, the lawyer expresses his suspicions concerning Kalanis' personality, about which he had always held certain reservations. He says that, while writing his account,

I often had the feeling that the true situation was somewhat inferior – a trite, undistinguished story, as Yannis Pendelitis would say – but at the same time I thought, rather absurdly, that for something to be credible it must surpass the truth. (pp. 370–1)

Thus he excuses himself for having written certain things that are not altogether likely. After his conversation with the sceptical Pendelitis – another poseur who feigns a lack of interest in intellectual and emotional matters – the narrator notes that perhaps Kalanis is simply a Don Juan, and that he has gone to Soviet Georgia not because of his communist beliefs but because Georgia is reputed to produce the world's most beautiful women. This surmise casts an entirely new light on Kalanis' relations with women as they have been described to the unsuspecting reader in the main body of the novel. For hitherto Kalanis has been presented as a serious middle-aged scientist who decides that in order to discover the truth he must break away from the conventions of family life. He attempts to reach the moving spirit of the universe by means of material things (which for him include women!), so that he can learn the secrets of absolute truth and beauty and check the progress of the world towards self-destruction.

When the reader is faced with an 'insincere' novelist employing an insincere narrator to tell an insincere character's

story with the help of the character's equally insincere friend, the multiple levels of belief and comprehension are bewildering. The author's true self has retreated into a maze which perhaps none of his readers can fully penetrate, since they are continually being led astray by red herrings; when they think they have arrived at the centre, it is only to find that there are still many passages which they have left unexplored.

It seems to me that Politis is being quite sincere in relating Kalanis' story, but that he refuses to identify himself completely with his hero. By leaving room for doubt, he is not committing himself fully to his thesis. The effect of the ironic technique is to keep the reader on the alert: since he is often called upon to revise his opinion of a character, he cannot let his intellect sleep and identify himself emotionally with the hero of the novel.²⁰

V Verbal and situational irony

The juxtaposition of the 'earnest' novel proper with the 'ironic' epilogue in *Lemonodasos* and *Hekate* may perhaps seem unsubtle and even disappointing to the reader. The author nevertheless incorporates some other, less obvious, ironies in the main body of the novels which serve to prepare the reader for the epilogues.²¹ In *Lemonodasos*, for instance, when Apostolou is first introduced to Virgo, he asks sarcastically (*ειρωνικά*) whether Virgo is a name or a symbol (p. 15) – a question which takes on special significance for the reader when Apostolou, later in the novel (p. 105), writes of her as 'eternally virgin' (*αειπαρθενή*) and a 'primitive Virgin Athena'. Again, soon after he and Virgo are first acquainted, she laughs at his mystical ideals, pointing to the incongruousness between his ideas and his thick glasses (p. 31).

Such ironies, often in the form of jokes on the author's part, are more frequent in *Hekate*, which is a more successful novel in many ways. Just as Virgo is Apostolou's ideal virgin, so several

²⁰ Politis' use of irony probably owes much to André Gide. In *La Porte étroite*, Alissa's journal (appended after the end of Jérôme's narration and unknown to Jérôme at the time he was writing) provides a completely new point of view and consequently adds a new dimension to the story which the reader has read so unsuspectingly.

²¹ Here, too, there is a parallel with Gide. In *La Symphonie pastorale*, the pastor-narrator misjudges his own character, yet lets his reader see his true personality between the lines of the narration, so that the reader can see the implications of the situation before the narrator himself does.

of the characters in *Hekate* bear names which are at the same time part of the symbolic and part of the ironic structure of the novel. Ersi, Kalanis' ideal woman, has studied physics, and, like her mythological namesake Herse, kills herself by throwing herself from the Acropolis. While Kalanis is in Aegina, uncertain how to direct his life, he encounters three women, named Aphrodite (whom he first sees emerging from the waves!), Hera and Athena (Hera's step-daughter!).²² Although the women remark that he is a 'forty-year-old Paris' (p. 59 – Paris was, we remember, Politis' real forename), Kalanis chooses Athena, presumably preferring science to love and beauty at this stage. Again, the coincidence of names between Pavlos, Ersi, Leia and her husband Joe Nazis in the main plot of *Hekate* and Pavlianos, Ersylia, Reina (Vasileia) and Joseph Nazi in the old chronicle that Kalanis reads is not only a hint at metempsychosis but also a word-game.

Considering the significance of the recurrent symbol of the moon in *Hekate*, Athena's exclamation, 'Ugh! the moon again' (p. 71), can be taken as a self-irony by the author as well as an ironic comment on Kalanis' earnestness. Again, Leia's dog Kichos (short for *Δὸν Κιχώτης*) is depicted as yawning while Kalanis and Leia discuss fate (pp. 122 and 124); he also barks at windmills (p. 259), and the narrator wonders whether the dog's sixth sense is tuned in to the nocturnal spirits riding through space on moonbeams (p. 263). Finally, even Kalanis has at times enough wit to see the funny side of Venieris' metaphysical theories (p. 45 – the 'Summer Varieties' as an incubator of ideas).

Nevertheless, it is in *Eroica* that the irony is best organized. Here there is no epilogue, but there is a narrator who introduces himself by name after the reader has read half the novel. He is called Paraskevas (which was Politis' baptismal name),²³ partly,

22. Hera's little son, who is the one who introduces Kalanis to the women, is called Eris: perhaps a pun on Eris, goddess of strife, or on Ares (who was Hera's son) or an embodiment of Eros – as well as being an anagram of Ersi.

23. Politis explained to me in conversation (2 December 1971) that the Church did not allow children to be baptized with non-Christian names, and that his parents had to choose a Christian name beginning with the same letter as his 'real' name. It is interesting to note that several of Politis' heroes (those who are of a mechanical turn of mind) have names beginning with the same letters: Pavlos (in *Lemonodasos* and *Hekate*), Paraskevas (in *Eroica*) and Pandelis (in *At Hadzi-frangos*).

perhaps, because he prepares (*παρασκευάζει*) the fire-pump; Monica calls him 'Man Friday' (p. 388/146), and it is on a Friday that the plot reaches its climax with the fatal shooting of Alekos. The whole series of events involving the marmalade tom-cat (*κοκκινόγατος*) leads up to Alekos' death and is deeply ironic. Monica's brother Gaetano has an almost inexplicable hatred for this cat, and at one point says, 'I shall have no peace till I've finished him off' (p. 385/141); this is after he has fired at the cat and hit Alekos' beret (p. 384/140); and it is of course Gaetano who finally shoots Alekos, mistaking him for the cat (p. 737/253). This irony, which is situational rather than verbal, serves to parallel the symbolism of the novel with a slightly humorous tone. Another example of situational irony is the juxtaposition of the boys' comparison of Alekos' pursuit of Loizos with Apollo careering through the sky in his chariot and Alekos' plodding journey by horse and cart. The gap between the ideal and the real is central to Politis' writing.

There is much verbal irony in *Eroica*. Some of it is connected with names,²⁴ some with literary allusion. Allusions abound in the novel, as they do in all Politis' writing: quotations from or references to ancient Greek literature especially, but also modern French, English and German literature.²⁵ Two examples could be cited to illustrate Politis' ironic use of quotation, by which he constantly reminds his readers that what he is writing is fiction. The first is the thrice-quoted song, 'Nous n'irons plus au bois, / les lauriers sont coupés' (4th ed., pp. 190,

24. Two examples: (i) One of the middle-aged characters who accompany the children to Defkalia (which is described in such a way as to remind the reader of Nafpaktos, or Lepanto) is Mr. Lepante, who is accused of being a Don Juan by a girl he flirts with (p. 518/183). This is a further indication of Politis' view of middle-aged men as Don Juans (compare Kalanis, Pendelitis, Joe Iraklidis-Nazis, Montecuculi and others) in contrast with the more natural (?) attitude of adolescents in love; there is also a pun here on Don John of Austria. (ii) One of Alekos' uncles is Uncle Plato, in whose name Politis plays on the double meaning of *θεῖος* ('uncle' and 'divine'): it is an old cliché in Greek for Plato's name to be accompanied by the epithet 'divine'. The boys even observe Uncle Plato's shadow on the wall (p. 530/200), which reminds one of Book X of *The Republic*. The influence of Plato's thought on Politis world-view is profound.

25. One should also add musical references, for instance the *Moonlight Sonata* in *Hekate* (p. 25) and *Der Wanderer* in *Eroica* (p. 532/202, after Loizos has run away).

194, 202),²⁶ which Monica sings after Loizos has met the travelling players in the wood at Defkalia and has gone off with them. As well as referring to the wood and symbolizing the end of a phase in the children's lives, these lines are the source for the title of Edouard Dujardin's interior-monologue novel *Les Lauriers sont coupés*: we are reminded of the important role that the interior monologue technique plays in *Eroica*. The second example is more extensive: Chapter III (the episode of the Montecuculis' masked ball) is a pastiche of the Misses Morkan's party in James Joyce's story 'The Dead'.²⁷ The clue here is provided by Teresa's words (in English), 'Kindly forget my existence for a few minutes' (p. 174/62), which are spoken by Gabriel in 'The Dead' (p. 195). Starting from this point, one can observe that much of the ball scene in *Eroica* is (albeit loosely) based on the description of the party in Joyce's story.²⁸ That Politis is not simply plagiarizing is indicated by his inclusion of the clue for the attentive reader; otherwise, perhaps, the similarities might have gone unnoticed. I believe the purpose of this pastiche is to emphasize the fictional nature of something which nevertheless meant much to Politis emotionally. And this is the point of all those elements which I have termed 'ironies' in the last two paragraphs (they are ironies because they contrast with the earnestness of the chief characters in the novel): to

objectivize the emotion felt by the author by distancing it from himself and, consequently, from the reader.

Politis, in other words, is profoundly sincere in his emotional involvement with his characters and plot, but he is not so naïve as to assume that the reader will automatically share this involvement. At the same time, the reader (if at least he has a sense of irony and a sense of humour) is led into the author's confidence surreptitiously and soon begins to share the author's emotions. The recurrent symbolism is interwoven with the ironic structure of the novels to form a complex texture which is the source of their charm: the interplay of emotion and irony makes Politis artistically one of the most successful Greek novelists of the 1930s.

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26. For reasons unknown to me, the second line of this quotation appears in the original version as 'les lauries sont fanés' (pp. 523, 526, 533). The alteration had been made by the second edition (1944, pp. 175, 180, 187).

27. In *Dubliners* (Penguin ed., 1968), pp. 172-210.

28. Among the similarities are: (i) The second sentence of the chapter in *Eroica* (p. 172 [omitted in 4th ed.]; cf. 'The Dead', p. 173); (ii) The hostesses peering over the banisters to see who is arriving (*Eroica*, p. 172/60; cf. 'The Dead', p. 173); (iii) A latecomer blaming his wife for the delay (*Eroica*, p. 174/63; cf. 'The Dead', p. 174); (iv) The interrupted conversations between Alekos and Monica, and between Gabriel and Miss Ivors in the middle of the lancers (*Eroica*, pp. 183-5/75-7; cf. 'The Dead', 185-6); (v) Alekos and Gabriel tapping the window-pane and wishing they were outside (*Eroica*, pp. 185-6/78; cf. 'The Dead', p. 189); (vi) The figure of a listening woman seen by one of the characters as a symbol of something indefinable (*Eroica*, p. 187/80, where this leads into another reference to English literature - a quotation from Arthur Symonds' poem 'Dance of the Daughters of Herodias'; cf. 'The Dead', p. 207); and (vii) The repeated 'goodnights' at the end of the party (18 in *Eroica*, pp. 197-8/94; 13 in 'The Dead', pp. 209-10).

Romantic Paradises: The Rôle of the Garden in the Byzantine Romance*

A. R. LITTLEWOOD

Ekphraseis of gardens¹ occur in only two of the five extant classical romances, those of Achilleus Tatios and of Longos,² but in Byzantine romances they are almost *de rigueur*:³ indeed of the only three⁴ that eschew the theme two, *Phlorios and Platziaphlore* and *Imberios and Margarona*, are basically Frankish rather than Byzantine while the third, Theodore Prodromos' *Rhodanthe and*

* This article is developed from a paper 'Artistry and Tradition in Byzantine Romantic Gardens' delivered to the Third Annual Byzantine Studies Conference (Columbia University, New York, December 1977), that was itself foreshadowed by an earlier paper 'The Romantic Paradise' delivered to the International Conference on the Ancient Novel (University College of North Wales, Bangor, July 1976). I am indebted for various sapient or illustrative suggestions to Professor H.-G. Beck of Munich, Dr. Averil Cameron of King's College, London, Professor R. A. Hadley of George Washington University and Professor A. K. Hieatt of the University of Western Ontario.

1. They are variously termed *κῆπος*, *λειμών*, *λιβάδι*, *ὄρχατος*, *παράδεισος*, *περιβόλι*, but in all instances the description of the contents belongs to the same tradition. In all but one instance (see below, p. 107) *λειμών* refers not to an open but to an enclosed garden-like meadow.

2. If this indeed be the name of the author of *Daphnis and Chloë* (see G. Dalmeyda, *Longos: Pastorales (Daphnis et Chloë)* 2nd ed. [Paris, 1960], pp. xif.).

3. References to all the ekphraseis may be found in the appendix. Those in the romantic epics, Nonnos' *Dionysiaka*, Basil Digenis Akritas and the Byzantine *Achilleis*, are included, but that of Meliteniotes' *Sophrosyne*, a singularly unromantic work, is omitted from the series, since, although the actual description of the garden is in the tradition, the purpose of the whole work is alien to that of the others.

4. It is not known whether or not the now fragmentary romance of Constantine Manasses contained an ekphrasis of a garden (for a possible clue see below, pp. 112f.).

Dosikles, closely follows Heliodoros' *Aithiopika*, a classical romance that does not contain a description of a garden. Ekphraseis, except for those in Longos,⁶ are generally considered an intrusive element pandering to a popular taste for pretty and even exotic but none the less irrelevant details.⁷ I wish to suggest, however, that despite their frequently derivatory and perhaps even on occasion mechanically imitative content⁸ ekphraseis of gardens are an integral part of the love-romance with an important psychological rôle to play.

As far as we can fathom the workings of his mind, primitive man associated or even identified a notable feature of his landscape, such as a crag, a spring or a wood, with a divinity, and did likewise with notable features of his emotional and his mental life. He then seems to have made an unconscious analogy between natural features and his emotions or concepts, his later 'nascent rationality . . . strengthening rather than opposing such instinctive associations'.⁹ In this way his divinities coalesced and natural features became invested with powers relevant to man. Gradually the associations that appeared to have the most rational basis became the most dominant: thus trees and flowers, which reproduce, water,

5. Heliodoros was once believed to be a Byzantine bishop (and so still D. M. Nicol, 'in the fifth century Heliodorus, Bishop of Trikkala, made a name for himself as the first Christian to write a love story', *Meteora*, rev. ed. (London 1975), p. 47) on the basis of Sokrates, *Eccl. Hist.* 5.22, but he is now generally stripped of rank and religion (Achilleus Tatios also was once thus elevated). His date is third or, more likely, fourth century (see R. Keydell, 'Zur Datierung der *Aithiopika* Heliodoros', in *Polychronion: Festschrift Fr. Dölger*, ed. P. Wirth [Heidelberg, 1966], pp. 345-50).

6. See in particular, H. H. O. Chalk, 'Eros and the Lesbian Pastorals of Longus', *JHS*, LXXX (1960), 32-51 and W. E. Forehand, 'Symbolic Gardens in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*', *Eranos*, LXXIV (1976), 103-12.

7. Despite the traditional contumely for especially the learned Byzantine romance there is recent evidence for a more sensitive and sympathetic understanding of these works in which even the ekphrasis is partly rehabilitated (see M. Alexiou, 'A Critical Reappraisal of Eustathios Makrembolites' *Hysmine and Hysminias*', *BMGS*, III [1977], 24).

8. The development of the tradition of the ekphrasis and the influence upon it of rhetorical theory were extensively explored by O. Schissel, *Der byzantinische Garten* (Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien, Phil.-hist. Klasse, Sitzungsberichte 221.2, 1942).

9. P. Piehler, *The Visionary Landscape: a Study in Medieval Allegory* (Montreal, 1971), p. 71.

which irrigates and gives life, and wind, which carries seeds and was widely held to be a fertilizing principle, all became sexual powers, or at a later stage, in the face of the growing sophistication of anthropomorphic theology, were at least deemed conducive towards love, while a barren landscape with stony mountain slope had the reverse effect. Such elements have always been used by poets, in both prose and verse, either unconsciously as background to their subject-matter or consciously as symbols.¹⁰ As C. S. Lewis says of the machinery of allegory, it 'may . . . be regarded as a system of conduit pipes which thus tap the deep, unfailing sources of poetry in the mind of the folk and convey their refreshment to lips which could not otherwise have found it'.¹¹ Thus a literary description of a garden, in itself unnecessary to the plot or argument, is not unlikely to be invested with erotic undertones; and here it seems significant, that, although love is the motivating force in all five classical romances, it earns but perfunctory attention in three – the exceptions are those of Achilleus Tatios and Longos, the only two that, as has been noted, do contain ekphraseis of gardens (and, indeed, both enjoy separate descriptions of two different gardens). This may be a coincidence, but the insistent appearance of a garden in the Byzantine love-romances suggests that it is not.

Frequently the garden is the scene for erotic action: seven gardens are used for love-making¹² and one, chronologically the first in the series, for rape;¹³ in four the hero receives the divine commandment that he is to fall in love with the heroine;¹⁴ in one the heroine is similarly charged;¹⁵ in one the lovers receive a prophecy of their future.¹⁶ Seven gardens belong to or

10. The outstanding example is the Ninth Similitude of the *Shepherd of Hermas*, wherein twelve spiritual states are allegorized by the different topographies of twelve mountains.

11. *The Allegory of Love: a Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford, 1936), p. 120.

12. Achilleus Tatios II, *Digenis Akritas* I, II, Eustathios Makrembolites, *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe* III, *Belthandros and Chrysantza* II, *Byzantine Achilleus* (Roman numerals refer to those given in the Appendix). In the first of these love-making is restricted to an erotic discourse sympathetically received.

13. Achilleus Tatios I.

14. Eustathios Makrembolites, *Belthandros and Chrysantza* I, *Libistros and Rhodame* I, II.

15. *Byzantine Achilleus*.

16. *Libistros and Rhodame* III.

Grott. 7.13–108): The first element constructed and described of Basil's new dwelling by the Euphrates is a garden. Of the whole series it has the most tenuous connexion with the heroine; however, there are erotic undertones to the description (e.g. 18–22) and we learn that after dinner, which he is wont to bring to a conclusion with his lute as he delights in her sweet singing and sinuous dancing, *προσηκον / τῶν ἡδέων ἐτρέφοντο, εἶτα πρὸς τὸν λειμῶνα / τὸν δηλωθέντα ἄνωθεν ὠραίου παραδείσου / σφόδρα ἀγαλλιώμενοι, Θεῷ εὐχαριστοῦντες* . . . (174–177).

EUSTATHIOS MAKREMBOLITES, HYSMINE AND HYSMINIAS (1.4–6, 2.1–11, 3.8, 4.4–20):⁶⁵ This garden is of primary importance in the first five books while the scene remains at Aulikomis. It is in the garden of her father's house that Hysminias first catches sight of Hysmine, is on two occasions embarrassed by her immodest overtures and finds the pavilion decorated with a painting of Eros who in a dream bullies him into loving her. It is again in this garden that he defends to his friend his new-found enslavement, first responds to her advances at a banquet, discovers her alone by day, discovers her alone by night and dreams of enjoying her but of being caught *in flagrante* by her enraged mother. Finally, after all their adventures, the moment that they reach Aulikomis again *θύομεν τοὺς γάμους πολυτελῶς ἐν μέσῳ τῷ τοῦ Σωσθένους κήπῳ, ἐν ἐκείνῃ πολυτελεῖ τραπέζῃ καὶ φρέατι, οἷς πρῶτον ἐρωτικὴν παστάδα κατεπηξάμεθα* (11.18.2).

NIKETAS EUGENIANOS, DROSILLA AND CHARIKLES (1.77–115): Amid rapine, slaughter and destruction, hero and heroine are first presented to us as captives in a plain that embraces a beauteous, enclosed meadow sacred to Dionysos in which Drosilla was attending a festival. The ekphrasis is promptly followed by one of the heroine herself.

CONSTANTINE MANASSES, ARISTANDROS AND KALLITHEA: The fragmentary remains include no ekphrasis of a garden, but one passage (frag. 21 Mazal) on mutual attraction in nature closely imitates a section of the discourse on this subject that Achilleus Tatios' hero delivers in a garden

65. These are the principal descriptions of the oft-recurring garden. An accurate and clear summary of the romance is given by Alexiou, *op. cit.* (n. 7), pp. 26–9.

immediately after its lengthy ekphrasis (the same theme does, however, occur also in Niketas Eugenianos [4.135–148] in a different setting). On a further fragment of Manasses involving the garden as an image of beauty see above, n. 44.

KALLIMACHOS AND CHRYSORRHOË I (274–354): The hero is first rewarded for scaling the precipitous mountain on which is perched the Castle of the Dragon with a view of a beautiful garden that he crosses in his rescue of the heroine. II (831–840): Since the heroine is discovered in pitiable condition the ekphrasis of her beauty is delayed until she has recovered. This is immediately followed by a very short ekphrasis of another garden (technically an island). III (1613–2483): Most of the action of the last third of the romance takes place in a garden (belonging to the palace of the anonymous king who has captured Chrysorrhoe). It does not enjoy a separate ekphrasis, but in no other romance is there so sustained and so manifestly sexual imagery drawn from a garden.

BELTHANDROS AND CHRYSANTZA I (282–313): This garden, belonging to the Castle of Eros, contains numerous broad and graphic hints to the hero that he is to love the heroine. II (832–1044): Since Belthandros saw Chrysantza only by magic in the Castle of Eros, he has to find her again in her father's castle at Antioch. There they exchange their first kisses and enjoy their first night together in another garden that belongs specifically to her. This garden again has no formal ekphrasis.

LIBISTROS AND RHODAMNE I (cod. Esc. 174–225, cod. Neap. 190–270, cod. Par. 2616–2693): The hero dreams that in a flowery meadow he is attacked by archers (Erotes) who force him to become a slave of love. II (cod. Esc. 246–294, cod. Par. 2722–2763): The Erotes conduct the hero to the garden of Eros where he gazes at significant works of art. This garden is attached to the palace of Eros to which the hero then proceeds, there to crave forgiveness of Eros himself for his past scorn of love and to be ordered to entertain a passion for the heroine. III (cod. Scal. 1312–1369, cod. Esc. 2448–2510, cod. Neap. 2149–2201, cod. Par. 2722–2763): A third garden, this time in the castle (Argyrokastron) of the heroine's father, contains a statue whose inscription foretells joy, two years of hardships and final, unexpected reunion for the now married couple.

BYZANTINE ACHILLEIS (cod. Neap. 709–794, cod. Lond.

486-432):⁶⁶ During a siege Achilles falls in love upon a far-off glimpse of the lovely princess, whose own private and enclosed garden is later the scene for both her renunciation of love and Eros' epiphany in the form of a bird to change her scorn for Achilles to love, for her love-song (itself full of garden-imagery), and for the heroic couple's love-making. The actual ekphrasis of the garden is followed directly by one of the princess (in this and in subsequent scenes the imagery of the garden is outshone only by that of *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoë*).

66. In the abbreviated version preserved in the Oxford MS. there is reference to the garden, but no formal ekphrasis.

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The Traditional Style of Early Demotic Greek Verse

E. M. and M. J. JEFFREYS

The subject of formulaic repetition in early demotic Greek verse has often been raised, but till recently has not been seriously studied. In two articles, one on *Imberios and Margarona* and the other on the *Chronicle of the Morea*, we have tried to take the first steps in such an analysis.¹ It is now possible to give statistics for another long work from the same period, *Ὁ Πόλεμος τῆς Τρωάδος*, the *War of Troy*, and to examine their implications in the light of our previous discussion.

This text has remained unedited, except for a few brief excerpts. The *editio princeps* is now in press.² There are seven

1. E. and M. Jeffreys, 'Imberios and Margarona: the manuscripts, sources and editions of a Byzantine verse romance', *Byzantion*, XLI (1971), 122-60; M. J. Jeffreys, 'Formulas in the Chronicle of the Morea', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XXVII (1973), 164-95 (cited hereafter as *Formulas*). To the bibliography given in these papers add: S. Baud-Bovy, *La Chanson populaire grecque du Dodécanèse*, I (Paris, 1936), pp. 342-64; D. A. Petropoulos, *Στερεότυποι στίχοι δημοτικῶν τραγουδιῶν*, in *Προσφορά εἰς Σ. Κ. Κυριακίδη*, *Ἑλληνικά*, Παράρτ., IV (Thessaloniki, 1953), 532-45; G. I. Kourmoules, *Ἔπος καὶ ἐπικὴ ὕλη*, *Ἐπιστ. Ἐπετηρὶς Φιλολ. Σχολ. Παν. Ἀθηνῶν*, II, 5 (1954-5), 212-60; C. A. Trypanis, 'Byzantine oral poetry', *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, LVI (1963), 1-3 (a seminal article, unaccountably missing from our previous bibliographies); D. Holton, *Λήγησις τοῦ Ἀλέξανδρου 'The Tale of Alexander'*, *Βυζαντινὴ καὶ Νεοελληνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*, I (Thessaloniki, 1974), pp. 56-7; A. Mohay, 'Schriftlichkeit und Mündlichkeit in der byzantinischen Literatur', *Acta Classica* (Debrecen), X-XI (1974-5), 175-82; G. Spadaro, 'Problemi relativi ai romanzi greci dell'età dei Paleologi', *Ἑλληνικά*, XXVIII (1975), 302-27.

2. All references to this text or to its individual manuscripts are by the numbering of the critical edition of E. M. Jeffreys and M. Papathomopoulos, to be published in the *Βυζαντινὴ καὶ Νεοελληνικὴ Βιβλιοθήκη*. In cases of

witnesses to the text: four manuscripts cover substantially the whole of the poem, a fifth gives about half, and there are two fragments of about 700 and 100 lines. All these manuscripts differ from each other in nearly every line – a textual situation found often in early demotic verse.

This raises questions which are controversial in many mediaeval vernacular literatures. Do the manuscripts represent distinct versions, probably separate recordings of a fluid oral poem which had not reached the stability of a single fixed text? In that case, it would be impossible to reconcile them into a single version, and futile to make the attempt.³ After much initial analysis, the editors of the *War of Troy* came to the conclusion that a single, written original text underlay all the versions. The chief reason was the fact that this poem is a translation of Benoit de Ste. Maure's *Roman de Troie*, which in various versions was translated into most of the early vernaculars of Europe.⁴ The Greek follows its French original

ambiguity, references are preceded by *War of Troy*. Previous editions: D. I. Mavrophrydes, 'Εκλογή μνημείων τῆς νεωτέρας ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης (Athens, 1866), pp. 183–211 (prints MS. B, Parisinus Graecus 2878, for lines 323–670, 801–1020, 7014–53, 7116–312, 10412–57); G. A. Gidel, *Études sur la littérature grecque moderne* (Paris, 1866), pp. 197–229 (MS. B for 335–9, 364–6, 388–90, 400–8, 411–598, 625–32, 738–40, 801–6, 3397–428); L. Politis, *Ποιητικὴ Ἀνθολογία*, I: *Πρὶν ἀπὸ τὴν Ἀλωσὴν* (Athens, 1967), pp. 134–7 (text critically established of lines 7117–230; in the second edition [Athens, 1975], the same lines are republished with corrections on the basis of the Jeffreys-Papathomopoulos edition); L. Politis, *Δύο φύλλα ἀπὸ χειρόγραφο τοῦ Ἰωάννου τῆς Τρωάδος*, 'Ελληνικά XXII (1969), 227–34 (publishes MS. R, a fragment from the Vrontis collection covering lines 2671–752, with corrections and variants from MSS. B and X, Bologna Univ. Gr. 3567).

3. This view is forthrightly put by C. A. Trypanis in his review of E. Trapp's edition of *Digenis Akritas*, *Gnomon*, XLVI (1974), 614–17. For different analyses of the problem see A. Sigalas, 'Révision de la méthode de restitution du texte des romans démotiques byzantins', *Annuaire de l'Inst. de phil. et d'hist. orient. et slaves de l'Université de Bruxelles*, XI (1951), 365–410, and H.-G. Beck, 'Die Volksliteratur', in H. Hunger et al., *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung*, I (Zurich, 1961), pp. 470–93.

4. *Roman de Troie*, 6 vols., ed. L. Constans (Paris, 1904–12); references to the text are to this edition, by line-number alone. For the wide influence of this romance see G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1949), pp. 50–5; H. Buchthal, *Historia Troiana* (London, 1971), pp. 1–8. The following discussion of textual relationships between Greek and French versions is summarized from the introduction to the forthcoming edition, where full documentation is

with some abbreviation (about 30,000 French octosyllables become rather more than 14,000 fifteen-syllable lines of Greek), and a good deal of simplification. Nevertheless, it is usually possible to relate every phrase of Greek to the corresponding French phrase from which it was translated. The similarity of model and translation is often close enough to solve quite subtle problems of alternative phraseology in the Greek manuscript tradition, as well as simpler difficulties like variant versions of names. An accurate translation on this scale seems to us unlikely on *a priori* grounds to have taken place within a purely oral framework. As we shall see, the translation seems to have been adapted only in part to fit a new series of oral phrase-patterns. It is difficult to escape the hypothesis of a single written Greek translation.

In addition, there is significance in the nature of the manuscript variants found in the Greek text. They are very numerous, and lines where surviving manuscripts are unanimous are quite rare. But the great majority of variants are relatively trivial, involving a change in verb tenses, for example, or alternative forms of names, or replacement of one preposition by another. Most affect single words; few alter as much as a half-line. A line-concordance of the manuscripts would show an overwhelming majority of cases where all versions agree for long passages on the number and general shape of the lines given, in spite of constant variation in individual words. One might expect true oral variants to show less line-by-line correspondence and perhaps more stability of phrasing within the line.⁵

Finally, there is the fact that the manuscripts fall into a clear stemmatic pattern, if one ignores trivial variants and concentrates on the comparatively rare occasions when complete lines are omitted or added. The existence of the French original puts the editors in a fortunate position. When the manuscripts disagree over the inclusion or omission of a line, it is usually possible to decide whether it is an example of a

given. (For a fuller summary see E. M. Jeffreys, 'The Manuscripts and Sources of the *War of Troy*', *Actes du XIV^e Congrès International des Études Byzantines 1971*, III (Bucharest, 1976), 91–4.

5. Cf. A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), pp. 99–123 (cited hereafter as *Singer*).

lacuna in some of the manuscripts, or of an insertion in the remainder. Thus one can sometimes be certain that a particular group of manuscripts agree in a stemmatically significant common error. The stemma has been tested over the whole poem, and has convinced the editors that it is a trustworthy means of recovering the general shape of an original text, in spite of constant difficulties with details. Their experience in establishing more than 14,000 lines of text with an enormous critical apparatus has left them in no doubt that the surviving manuscripts derive from a single original, which was almost certainly a written translation from the French model.

We have gathered formulaic statistics from the text thus established. There has been no attempt at a full formula count as was done for the *Chronicle of the Morea* and its statistical control the *Alexander* poem.⁶ Once the general principle has been established that one poem in this metre and style is full of formulas and another is not, it is easy to extend the principle to cover another poem by taking samples. Three fifty-line passages were selected (1026–75, 9157–206, 11349–99), chosen by three criteria: that they should be widely spaced, attested in as many manuscripts as possible, and should be a balanced mixture of speech, battle and other narrative, reflecting the mixture of the whole poem. All the rest of the text was searched for phrases parallel to those in the samples.⁷ The minimum length for a formula and the accuracy of repetition demanded are those established in the analysis of the *Chronicle of the Morea*.⁸ Basically, a formula should fill at least a half-line of a fifteen-syllable political verse with a phrase which is substantially identical with another.

Of the 300 half-lines in the sample, 88 have been found repeated more or less exactly elsewhere; in other words, 29.3 per cent of the samples is certainly formulaic within our definition of the term. A further 17 half-lines, or 5.7 per cent of the samples, are borderline cases, narrowly excluded on a strict

6. Formulas, 175–7.

7. We must record grateful thanks to Miss Isabella Tsavari, of the University of Ioannina, who shared with us the labour of searching for formulas in the *War of Troy*.

8. Formulas, 175.

interpretation of the definition.⁹ Thus many people would accept a total of 35 per cent of formulas. These figures of 29.3 per cent and 35 per cent may be compared directly with 31.7 per cent and 38.4 per cent, the figures found in the *Chronicle of the Morea*.¹⁰ It is noticeable that the two earlier examples from the *War of Troy* give much higher figures, which are forced down by a comparatively unformulaic third sample. This can be related to a marked change in the texture of the poem around line 11090, corresponding to a major break in Benoit's French narrative, as he changes sources from Dares of Phrygia to Dictys of Crete. Strangely at this point the Greek translation becomes more literal and less careful in ensuring that it makes sense without reference to its original. Formulas become noticeably fewer, as is demonstrated in the third sample. It is easy to make hypotheses about the reason for this change in the translator's technique, but almost impossible to evaluate them. Here we are interested only in formulaic density. It is fair to say that for its first 11,000 lines the *War of Troy* is no less formulaic than the *Chronicle*.

Equally interesting indices of the density and type of formulas found in the poem may be derived from a list of its more commonly repeated half-lines. The following are repeated (within the limits described above) 12 times or more in the whole poem: *ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν* (28 examples); *καλοὺς καβαλαρίους* (25); *καὶ κονταρέα(ν) τὸν ἔδωκε* (24); *ὅσον τινὰς οὐκ εἶδε* (23); *ἠθέλαν οὐκ ἠθέλασι* (21); *μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης* (20); *ἔδωκαν κονταρέας* (20); *Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος* (first half) (20); *ὁ Ἀγαμέμνων βασιλεὺς* (19); *μικροὶ τε καὶ μεγάλοι* (18); *ἀπὸ τὸν θάνατόν σου* (18); *εἰς τὸν ἅπαντα κόσμον* (18); *πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν* (18); *ἀπάνω εἰς τὸ σκουτάρι* (15); *καλλιότερος οὐκ ἦτον* (15); *εἰς γῆν ἀποθαμένος* (14); *ὅσον ἠμπόρει πλέον* (14); *κακὰ τὸν ὑπαγαίνει* (14); *καὶ ἀπὸ τὰ δύο μέρη* (14); *ταῦτα τὸν συντυχαίνει* (14); *τὸ σκουτάριν ἐπέρασε* (14); *καὶ τί νὰ λέγω τὰ πολλά* (13); *πίπτει ἀποθαμένος* (13); *χαρὰν μεγάλην εἶχας* (13); *ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ λουρίκιν* (13); *ζημίαν μεγάλην κάμνει* (13); *ἐξ ὅλης τῆς καρδίας* (13); *ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν σωμάτων* (13); *ἡμέρας τῆς ζωῆς μου* (13);

9. Breakdown of figures, by half lines: (i) 1026–75: 37 definite, 6 borderline; (ii) 9157–206: 33 definite, 4 borderline; (iii) 11349–99: 18 definite, 7 borderline.

10. Formulas, 190.

τίποτε μὴ φοβᾶσαι (13); Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος (second half) (12);
χαρὰν μεγάλην εἶχαν (12); μετὰ τοῦ Μενελάου (12); καὶ τότε νῦν
εἶδες πόλεμον (12); εἰς ὅλον τὸ περίγειον (12); ὁποῦ τοῦς
ἠγαποῦσαν (12); κρατῶντα τὸ σπαθί του (12); ὁ Ἀχιλλεύς ὁ
θανυμαστός (12).

This list may be compared directly with that compiled from the *Chronicle of the Morea*.¹¹ It must be borne in mind, of course, that the *War of Troy* is more than half as long again as the *Chronicle*: more than 14,000 lines for the former and less than 9,000 lines in manuscript H of the latter. It is no surprise, therefore, that the number of items in the list above (38) is larger than the equivalent figure for the *Chronicle* (26 phrases repeated 12 times or more). In fact on simple statistical grounds one would expect a rather larger difference. It is surprising that no phrases in the *War of Troy*, even if we combine the two half-line formulas for Telamonian Ajax to make a total of 32, are more than one half as frequent as ὁ πρίγκιπα Γυλιάμος (62 examples) from the *Chronicle*. With these qualifications, one may conclude that there is little difference between the two texts with respect to their most frequent formulas.

We must now pass from statistics to their interpretation. What can a formula count tell us about the nature of the poem, the poet and his audience? Does this technique have a serious place in the literary analysis of such texts? Some conclusions on this subject have already been stated for the *Chronicle*,¹² but they must now be refined a little on the basis of the new figures.

There seems to be little room for compromise on this issue across the whole spectrum of early vernacular literatures. The most commonly voiced opinions take the form of thesis and refutation — those who accept the validity in mediaeval studies of the theories of Milman Parry and Albert B. Lord,¹³ and those who do not.¹⁴ Those who count formulas believe almost

11. Formulas, 178–81 (but note that that table includes all repetitions with more than eight examples).

12. Formulas, 191–5.

13. See E. R. Haynes, *Bibliography of Oral Literature* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973).

14. Among the most aggressively negative views one may cite M. Delbouille, 'Les chansons de geste et le livre', in *La Technique littéraire des chansons de geste* (Actes du Colloque de Liège, Paris, 1959), pp. 295–407, and I. Siciliano, *Les Chansons de geste et l'épopée* (Turin, 1968), esp. pp. 137–99.

unanimously that they are measuring an important parameter of poetic style. Most would agree with Lord that a high formulaic count tells the researcher a good deal about the creator of a given version of a poem. He must be an oral poet, accustomed to performing songs before an audience, and in some sense re-creating them at each singing. He is most unlikely to be literate, for the skills of reading and writing would have given him the idea of a fixed, 'correct' text to be learned by heart, and would have removed his reliance on formulas. He probably felt no need himself to preserve his poem in writing. Quite possibly the surviving manuscript is the descendant of an 'oral dictated text', which would have been dictated to a scribe in a slow parody of his usual oral performance.¹⁵

Others have challenged this point of view on practical grounds, showing that some of these conclusions cannot be applied to some poems with high formulaic content. Thus, since the supporters of the oral-formulaic theory tend to insist that their conclusions be accepted as a whole, the entire technique of formula counting has been somewhat discredited as a tool of literary criticism.¹⁶

The present study of formulas in the *War of Troy* seems to confirm the latter view rather than the former. The editors of the text, for reasons detailed above, have been compelled to conclude that the surviving manuscripts derive from a single original. This original was a fairly accurate translation over many thousands of lines, which seems to suggest the normal processes of literary translation. But the poem has a percentage of formulas which would classify it as an oral poem by most of the standards set by Lord and his colleagues.¹⁷ Such a situation is by no means unique in mediaeval literature,¹⁸ but cannot to

15. The basis for these judgements is laid by Lord, *Singer*, and they are applied to mediaeval epic in Chapter 10 of that work, pp. 198–221.

16. A sketch of the lines of conflict in mediaeval studies, designed particularly for application to early demotic poetry, was attempted in Formulas, 168–75.

17. See A. B. Lord, 'Homer as Oral Poet', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, LXXII (1967), 20–1 (cited hereafter as *Homer as Oral Poet*); J. J. Duggan, 'Formulas in the *Couronnement de Louis*', *Romania*, LXXXVII (1966), 343–4; idem, *The Song of Roland* (Berkeley-Los Angeles, 1973), pp. 29–30.

18. Several cases, for example, of formulaic translations into Anglo-Saxon are given by L. D. Benson, 'The Literary Character of Anglo-Saxon Formulaic

our knowledge be paralleled in surviving traditions of oral poetry. Even allowing for unsuspected differences between oral and literary societies, and the consequent danger of applying literate prejudices to an oral situation, we find ourselves unable to draw the conclusion that the translator of the *War of Troy* was illiterate; in fact it seems almost incontrovertible that his motives in preserving his translation on paper were quite conventional, and that he wrote it down himself. Though these facts are unprovable, they are equally beyond disproof, especially by arguments which equate nineteenth- and twentieth-century oral societies with those which produced mediaeval literature.

It seems that we must picture a literate man translating a written French text into a written Greek original *War of Troy*. In that case, what is the use of formulaic analysis of the resulting text? If the conclusions conventionally drawn from a high formula count must always be accepted as a whole, then the hypothesis of a literate writer would seem to deny the relevance of the whole technique. It is time to pass from such negative probing of the inflated claims of the Parry-Lord method to examine its central core of undoubted significance.

It cannot be pointed out too often that poems with high formulaic percentages appear always at the same stage of literary history, when a new language or a new linguistic stratum is first written down.¹⁹ We cannot accept this as a coincidence, a series of conscious choices by many individual poets widely separated in time and place. In our view the statistical evidence of the formulas in the *War of Troy* witnesses as cogently to the nature of its style as does the existence of the French original, which imposes the conclusion of a literary origin. Formulas only appear in such numbers in poems closely connected with a tradition of oral poetry. The translator has written a 'transitional' text between oral and written poetry – a written poem with most of the features of oral style.

Poetry', *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association*, LXXXI (1966), 334–41, and for Middle English by A. C. Baugh, 'Improvisation in the Middle English Romance', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CIII (1959), 431–4.

19. This point is probably best made by the huge range of C. M. Bowra, *Heroic Poetry* (London, 1952), esp. pp. 215–53.

Lord has found no such transitional texts in Yugoslavia, and has concluded that they are unlikely to have existed in ancient or mediaeval societies either. He believes that literacy will always tend to destroy an oral poet's abilities and to reduce the formulaic content of his work. At times, he appears to argue that sheer numbers of formulas *prove* the illiteracy of the composer of the poem.²⁰ But it seems to us that there are so many cultural differences between twentieth-century Yugoslavia and mediaeval societies, many of them centring on this very question of literacy, that Lord's analogy cannot be regarded as conclusive. The fact that no transitional texts are found in Yugoslavia does not give decisive evidence about their existence in Greek lands during the late Byzantine period.

Whereas a Serbian oral poet would be taught to read a language close to his own spoken idiom, the translator of the *War of Troy* is unlikely to have learned to read by using popular texts, for prose in demotic Greek was not written systematically till much later, and manuscripts of verse texts in the vernacular were not common. Education was regularly conducted at a more learned linguistic level roughly corresponding to the position of Latin in Western mediaeval education.²¹ Surely it would be easier for him than for his Yugoslav counterpart to keep his skill in vernacular verse free from the influence of his formal literary training? Further, manuscript seems less likely to impose on a poet the corrupting idea of a fixed text than would a printed page. Indeed, if one looks at the surviving manuscripts of the *War of Troy* (or of any other mediaeval vernacular poem early in the literary history of the language concerned),²² it is most unlikely that they could ever have imposed upon their readers the concept of a stable text. The appearance of the page naturally varies greatly. There is no standardization of

20. E.g. Singer, pp. 130–3, but cf. *Homer as Oral Poet*, p. 13: 'Literary poets who imitate oral poetry exist. I have not found as yet a literate oral poet, that is to say a good oral poet who has learned to write, who has in fact written either imitations of oral poetry or oral poetry.'

21. This is a rash statement, given the diversity and obscurity of the societies in which the earliest demotic texts were produced. One can only say that we know of no indication before the sixteenth century of the use of vernacular Greek in education.

22. See the various mediaeval vernaculars studied in H. Hunger et al., *Geschichte der Textüberlieferung* (Zurich, 1961).

orthography, so that the spelling fluctuates alarmingly in almost every word. Worse still, as we have said, there is no accuracy in the preservation of the words and grammatical forms of the text. In our opinion, this is not a case of literacy imposing its rigid standards upon a fluctuating oral tradition, but the reverse. The fluidity of the tradition has been carried over into its written expression, probably because the writers of the manuscripts recognized an oral style which did not demand word-for-word reproduction. Finally, one must point to the value and cultural status of the manuscript as against the printed book. It is unlikely that our translator had access to a big library, for obvious financial reasons. Even the books he was able to read are statistically unlikely to have included many texts of vernacular poetry, which were quite rare before the invention of printing. To make an obvious but relevant point, he cannot have read a copy of the *War of Troy* in Greek before he himself wrote down the poem for the first time. Compare his position with that of the Yugoslav oral poet in the 1930s, in a society with many printed books, who probably learned to read as part of a government literacy drive, using texts of oral songs in his own repertoire.²³ To our minds it is not surprising that literacy should undermine oral style in such circumstances. This is no proof that the same occurred in a mediaeval situation.

We would like to suggest that the translator of the *War of Troy* lived in a society whose literature of entertainment was at an oral level, expressed in a similar metre, style and language to those which he used in his translation. It is impossible to say whether or not he himself was a performer of this oral poetry, an 'oral singer' as defined by Lord. Certainly his mind was fully attuned to its rhythms and patterns of expression. There was probably no other conveniently available metre and style for so long a work;²⁴ it may have had the virtue of attracting a popular

23. Lord, *Singer*, pp. 136-7. In *Homer as Oral Poet*, pp. 2-3, note the instructive case of the Moslem priest in the region of Pešter who learned his songs from his father. 'After [he] had read the songbook versions of songs he had learned from his father, he changed his father's version to agree with those in the songbook. Fortunately a fair number of songs that his father sang are not in the songbooks.' Not only did the translator of the *War of Troy* not find the poem in a songbook, he lived in a society with very few written versions of any work in the style and metre of contemporary oral poetry.

24. On the importance of the fifteen-syllable political verse in early demotic

audience. His poem thus takes on most of the features of contemporary oral poetry, including its high level of formulas. He may have felt some positive aesthetic value in their use, but more likely they came to him as an unavoidable aspect of the style. No doubt formulas were of some help in his composition, for they had, inevitably, convenient metrical shapes. He would not, of course, have had the same *compulsion* to use them as an oral singer, whose songs must be constantly recollected and recomposed before an audience. But the number of formulas used seems not to have been reduced significantly.

One may see how the poet's mind worked by comparing his translation with its original. Benoit's work is certainly not free of repetitions, though his style has progressed from the formulaic *chanson de geste* towards the more literary manner of the *roman courtois*:²⁵ the assonantal *laisse* has given place to rhyming couplets, and decasyllables to octosyllables. Sometimes Benoit's formulas are reflected by Greek formulas, and may have prompted them. We have examined the French text at points corresponding to the 32 examples of Αἶας ὁ Τελαμώνιος in the *War of Troy*, used as a formula in both halves of the line. Twice one finds a full-line equivalent phrase 'Telamonius Αἶας' (5619 = *War of Troy* 2273; 7341 = 3061). Seven times Benoit uses the six-syllable formula 'Telamon Αἶας' (10131 = *War of Troy* 4165; 20579 = 9243; 23813 = 10816; 24544 = 11183; 25828 = 11968; 26609 = 12489; 28559 = 13562), and eight times the four-syllable hemistich formula 'Reis Telamon'²⁶ (8970 = *War of Troy* 3712; 9297 = 3826; 9920 = 4048; 13518 = 5786; 18593 = 8128; 20546 = 9231; 20960 = 9381; 23648 = 10737). Twice the two different Ajaxes (frequently confused in both texts) are coupled in the French line 'E Telamon e Αἶας', which is reflected in the Greek by the regular formula for Telamonian Ajax alone (11306 = *War of Troy* 4686; 18866 = 8244). At the first reference to the

literature, see M. J. Jeffreys, 'The Nature and Origin of the Political Verse', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, XXVIII (1976), pp. 142-95, esp. pp. 161, 178.

25. See the relevant pages of standard histories, e.g. J. Roger and J.-E. Payen, *Histoire de la littérature française*, I (Paris, 1969), pp. 48-9; J. Fox, *A Literary History of France: the Middle Ages* (London, 1974), pp. 134-9.

26. Though brief in comparison with Greek formulas, this phrase fills a regular division of the line and so meets the requirements of the formulaic definition.

hero, Benoit distinguishes him from the other Ajax who has just been mentioned:

Mais un autre Aïaus i ot
Qui Telamon en sornon ot.
Icist fu mout de grant valor (5187-9)

The Greek translator responds with

Αἶας ὁ Τελαμώνιος ἦτον πολλῆς ἀξίας (2106).

But there is no need for both 'Aïaus' and 'Telamon', for a whole line or hemistich formula in French to trigger the Greek formula. It responds six times to 'Telamon' alone (8876 = *War of Troy* 3659; 8947 = 3704; 13092 = 5525; 14494 = 6225; 23967 = 10889; 24016 = 10906), and four times to 'Aïaus' alone (6638 = *War of Troy* 2795; 8222 = 3349; 9432 = 3877; 22560 = 10237). Twice the Greek uses the formula in inserted information on Ajax's actions not recorded by Benoit (*War of Troy* 1131, 10091). These are the only occasions when the Greek formula does not have an immediate trigger in the French.

It seems plain with this phrase – and the point will be amply confirmed later – that the frequent use of a formula in the Greek is not prompted by the nature of the French text. Formulas in the French are shorter, less numerous, and more varied in shape. Why therefore did the translator so often refer to Ajax with the same phrase, and where did he get it from? If his source were oral poetry, we must postulate the existence in the fourteenth century of oral songs on the Homeric story. In spite of the frequency of Homeric names and distorted Homeric material among the written remains of popular literature from the period,²⁷ this hypothesis seems to us unlikely. In particular, it is obvious that many of Benoit's characters and events, the standard elements of the Troy story, were unfamiliar to the

27. Especially in the *Achilleis*, ed. D. C. Hesseling, *L'Achilleïde byzantine* (Amsterdam, 1919); *Troas*, eds. L. Norgaard and O. L. Smith, *A Byzantine Iliad* (Copenhagen, 1975); and Constantine Hermoniakos, *La Guerre de Troie*, ed. E. Legrand (Paris, 1890), where Achilles, Priam, Agamemnon, Paris, etc., appear.

Greek translator.²⁸ A more likely source is the *Σύνοψις Ἱστορικῆ* of Constantine Manasses, the Trojan section of which was plainly known to him.²⁹ Αἶας ὁ Τελαμώνιος is found there in the first half of line 1399. But the elements of the phrase are so simple that the translator could easily have invented it. Whatever the source, we would suggest that its regular use as a formula demonstrates the existence of pressures towards a formulaic style. Though oral tradition can hardly have supplied the formula itself, it probably developed in the translator the habit of using and even coining such formulas. This simple, functional phrase, an economical means of reference to an apparently unfamiliar hero, marks one end of a continuum of formula types found in the *War of Troy*.

At the other end of the continuum are some formulaic clichés found far and wide through early demotic literature. Some, like *μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης*,³⁰ are so simple in construction and so like many other phrases which fill the same part of the fifteen-syllable line that their existence passes almost unnoticed. Others, especially *μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι*,³¹ have a more idiosyncratic pattern which marks them off more definitely as formulas. Both of these, and several more, are accepted as clichés even by those who reject an oral-formulaic basis for the style of these poems.³² They are discounted, for example, in discussions of borrowings from one poem to another.

We have looked for triggers in the French text at points where the Greek uses *μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης*. There are words and

28. E.g. Αἰνέας (Αἰνείας), Ἀλτάβιος (Ταλθύβιος), Ἀνθενώρ (Ἀντήνωρ), Δάρειος (Δάρης), Ἐλενής (Ἐλενος), Ἐρκούλιος (Ἡρακλῆς), Ἰνδομενεύς (Ἰδομενεύς), Καλκάς (Κάλχας), Κουβὰ (Ἐκάβη), Λαομήδης (Λαομέδων), etc., etc.

29. There are several quotations of single lines, unmistakable because of their formal linguistic level: e.g.

καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἐν ταῦθ' αὖ μοι καὶ μέχρι τούτων στήσω

(*War of Troy* 739, cf. *Σύνοψις Ἱστορικῆ* 18). See also *War of Troy* 10094-5, 13245, cf. *Σύνοψις Ἱστορικῆ* 1406-7, 1325.

30. Twenty examples in the *War of Troy*; cf. the list given by Mohay, op. cit., p. 177.

31. There are more than one hundred examples of this formula in our files, including eighteen in the *War of Troy*. Cf. E. and M. Jeffreys, op. cit., p. 147; Holton, op. cit., p. 56; Mohay, op. cit., p. 177; Spadaro, op. cit., p. 326.

32. E.g. Spadaro, op. cit., pp. 325-6.

phrases indicating willingness to perform an action (mout le desir 2013, cf. *War of Troy* 709; volontiers 8942, cf. 3699; 28099, cf. 13368); pleasure (joiant e lié 25461, cf. 11713; joios 28099, cf. 13368; a gré 28326, cf. 13415); amiability (bonement 881, cf. 90) and respectful acceptance (a grant honor 28277, cf. 13382). Once a similar meaning is implied less explicitly (il trestoz les enmercie 945, cf. 123) and once the Greek phrase is inserted redundantly, duplicating an accurate word-for-word translation of the idea of respectful service in the French text (E honorent e servirent 28109, cf. . . . τὸν ἐδέχθησαν μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης, ἐδοῦλευσαν, ἐτίμησαν . . . 13377–8). More often than not, however, the Greek formula has no precise equivalent in the French, though the general situation may be similar to one of those listed above (1464, cf. *War of Troy* 425; 1543, cf. 474; 3273, cf. 1349; 4809, cf. 1946; 5720, cf. 2312; 13018, cf. 5495; 13886, cf. 5950; 26265, cf. 12264; 27260, cf. 12878; 28340, cf. 13424; 28461, cf. 13489).

The other common cliché mentioned earlier, μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι, is a slightly more striking phrase than μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης, with a more complex range of relationships to equivalent phrases in the French text. The most complete parallel is:

Les reis loë toz un e un
E tot l'autre peuple comun
(26251–2, cf. *War of Troy* 12256)

where the two ideas of 'small' and 'great' are both represented in each text. Sometimes the French original refers only to μικροί and not to μεγάλοι, as in 'tuit nostre vassal' (25934, cf. 12038), or its negative equivalent 'en l'ost n'ot si povre Grezeis . . .' (26797, cf. 12527). At other times the idea of μεγάλοι predominates: 'Seignor e vesque e pere e maistre' (13738, cf. 5893) and

Li haut home e li preisié,
Li duc, li prince e li demeine
Li amiraut e li chataine
(18146–8, cf. 7895).

Such lists are the closest approximations which may be found in the French text to the wording of the Greek formula.

That formula's basic semantic content is, of course, 'all' or 'every', and so it is no surprise to see that it responds to 'tuit' (19129 twice, cf. 8407; 25934, cf. 12038), 'tote' (28423, cf. 13468), 'trestuit' (2205, cf. 812), 'maint' (23157 twice, cf. 10517), and even 'comunaument' (25001, cf. 11456). Other parallel phrases are 'cil de la navie' (5866, cf. 2382) and 'l'ost' (26845, cf. 12567 and 26894, cf. 12604). It is noticeable that in the examples referred to in this paragraph the sense of 'all' is nearly always conveyed by a form of the words πᾶς or ὅλος in the first half of the Greek line of which μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι forms the second half. This cliché is thus added, as it were, as a reflex, to emphasize the idea 'all', not usually to give it its first expression. The clearest case of this sort arises at 23795–9 (cf. 10799–802), where the French text is fully represented in the Greek without the cliché, which has been added to the previous line:

Li dameiseau fu mout joïz
Et a grant honor recoilliz.
En l'ost nen ot si orgoillos,
Si riche ne si desdeignos,
Qui encontre ne li alast . . .

Ὁ νέος ἦν χαираμένος μετὰ μεγάλης φήμης.
Οἱ πάντες τὸν ἐδέχθησαν, μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι.
Τόσα οὐκ ἦτον ἀλαζόν, βασιλεὺς ἐπηρμένος,
νὰ μὴ ὑπάγῃ εἰς συνάντησιν τοῦ υἱοῦ Ἀχιλλέως.

There remain four cases where there seems to be no word or idea in the French text to explain the existence of μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι in the Greek: 3176 (cf. 1301), 20346 (cf. 9108), 26253 (cf. 12258), though here notice that there has been another occurrence of the Greek formula at 12256), 27167 (cf. 12813).

All the innumerable repeated phrases of the *War of Troy* must fall somewhere between the two extreme categories we have examined: Αἴας ὁ Τελαμώνιος, which is most unlikely to have been an oral formula, and μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης and μικροί τε καὶ μεγάλοι, which almost certainly were. Our judgement about the nature of this poem will depend to a great extent on the difficult

decision as to which of the two categories is predominant. The question may be put in the following way: do we have in this poem a real insight into the subject-matter and phraseology of the oral tradition, as well as its style? Or do we have a work in which the translator-poet's own clichés have been converted into formulas by the pressures of the traditional genre he chose to follow – where repeated phrases derived perhaps from his reading or from the French original are more numerous than those which are direct oral borrowings? Can we, for example, take the martial formulas which are so dominant in the *War of Troy* and combine them with the name formulas for Moreot heroes which are equally dominant in the *Chronicle*,³³ and assume that these are separate reflections of oral verse in the fourteenth century? Are these poems, taken together, evidence for martial songs about the heroes of the Frankish Morea? If so, we could assume that the *Chronicle* took some regular oral heroes and portrayed them in an unfamiliar context of legal and diplomatic wrangling, while the *War of Troy* placed unfamiliar Homeric heroes in a regular oral context of chivalrous warfare.

This final suggestion, however beguiling, is quite unprovable in present circumstances. Even the earlier questions are very difficult to answer, because of the enormous scope of the evidence required to support every detail of the case. To show, for example, that a given phrase was probably an oral formula, it must be found repeated in, say, three or four texts of this period. To show the converse – that a phrase repeated within the *War of Troy* was probably coined by the translator himself – is more difficult still. Unless there is evidence from the nature of the phrase (as with formulas for Homeric heroes), one must be able to assert that it is not found repeated in other texts. Such a statement could only be supported by formulaic analysis of a very large body of verse. In spite of these serious problems, however, it is possible to make a few preliminary remarks on the question.³⁴ The rest of this paper will attempt to do so.

33. See the lists on pp. 119–20 above, and *Formulas*, 178–81.

34. Evidence for the use of phrases outside the *War of Troy* is cited from the following editions:

Ach.: *L'Achilléide byzantine*, ed. D. C. Hesseling (Amsterdam, 1919);
Belis.: 'Il poema bizantino del Belisario', ed. E. Follieri, *La poesia epica e la sua formazione* (Accad. Naz. dei Lincei, anno CCCLXVII, 1970), quad. 139, 583–61;
Chron. Mor.: *The Chronicle of the Morea*, ed. J. Schmitt (London, 1904).

Let us begin systematically from the oral end of the continuum, by examining some phrases with a more specific meaning than those so far considered. For example, the question *Τί νά λέγω τὰ πολλά*; with a *καί* at the beginning or a pronoun after *νά* to make up the necessary eight syllables, occurs thirteen times in the *War of Troy* and frequently elsewhere.³⁵ Formally, of course, this is a personal intervention by the poet to abbreviate his text, and sometimes it corresponds to similar phrases in the French, as in 'Que t'en fereie lonc sermon' (1381, cf. *War of Troy* 372), 'Que vos ireie porloignant' (16984, cf. 7407) and 'Quos en fereie lonc sermon' (26003, cf. 12084). The most common parallels in the French text, however, are first- or third-person comments with a variety of rather different meanings, like 'Ne nus nel vos savreit retraire' (2772, cf. 1112), 'Co set om bien' (11672, cf. 4846) or 'Solonc l'Autor en dirai veir' (18877, cf. 8248). Here the Greek phrase seems to represent a reaction to the existence of a comment in the French original, not to the meaning of the comment. On three other occasions (486, 1896, 8241) there seems to be no parallel in the French text, nor any significant omission in the Greek translation to motivate the use of the Greek phrase. In spite of its superficially

Imb.: 'Imberios and Margarona', ed. E. Kriaras, *Βυζαντινά ιπποτικά μυθιοπορήματα* (Athens, 1956), pp. 213–32;
Lib.: *Le Roman de Libistros et Rhodamne*, ed. J. A. Lambert (Amsterdam, 1985);

Phlor.: 'Phlorios and Platzia-phlora', ed. E. Kriaras, *Βυζαντινά ιπποτικά μυθιοπορήματα* (Athens, 1956), pp. 141–77;
Tam.: *Θρήνος περί Ταμυρλάννου*, ed. G. Wagner, *Mediaeval Greek Texts* (London, 1870), pp. 105–9;

Troas.: *A Byzantine Iliad*, eds. L. Norgaard and O. L. Smith (Copenhagen, 1975);
Thren.: *Ἀλωσης τῆς Κωνσταντινουπόλεως*, ed. G. Wagner, *Mediaeval Greek Texts* (London, 1870), pp. 141–70.

Negative statements – that we have been unable to find other examples of a given phrase – are of course impossible to substantiate. We have searched carefully through the texts listed above and several others, but it is likely that readers may turn up cases that we have missed.

35. *War of Troy* 372 (cf. 1381), 1099 (cf. 2753), 1112 (cf. 2772), 1486 (cf. 3567), 1896 (cf. 4665), 4846 (cf. 11672), 5212 (cf. 12436), 5378 (cf. 12863), 7407 (cf. 16894), 8241 (cf. 18860), 8248 (cf. 18877), 11019 (cf. 24252), 12084 (cf. 26003). *Ach.* 1552; *Chron.* 203, 482, 548, 753, 845, 1092, 1734, 2524, 2923, 4055, 4842, 8569; *Tam.* 80.

personal nature, *Τί νὰ λέγω τὰ πολλά*; is as much of a cliché as *μετὰ χαρᾶς μεγάλης*.

Another phrase whose formulaic status is beyond dispute is *πηδᾶ καβαλικεύει* (ten examples in the *War of Troy* and many elsewhere).³⁶ The meaning of these words prevents them from being used as a line-filler, because they describe a specific event in the story of the poem. They are usually paralleled in the French by words for mounting or riding a horse, or both. It is quite a striking phrase, far from the most obvious combination of words, surely, to express this action. So frequently is it found, however, that its unusual quality is blunted by familiarity. It seems unlikely that this particular phrase should have been made up by several different poets simultaneously without a common source in oral tradition. This is an addition to our list of traditional formulas, and its distinctive quality and wide occurrence add to our theoretical arguments for an oral background to this whole genre of poetry.

When a repeated phrase is less striking, the case for oral-formulaic origin, though not self-evident, may still be strong. For *ἐδῶκαν κονταρέας*, for example, there are twenty cases in the *War of Troy* and twenty-four other similar examples like *καὶ κονταρεῖν τοῦ ἔδωκεν* or *καὶ κονταρεῖς ἐδώκασιν*, where the phrase is adapted for the first half of the line.³⁷ Similar phrases occur in both halves of the line in several other poems.³⁸ These words, it must be admitted, are a simple, literal description of

36. See our list in E. and M. Jeffreys, op. cit., p. 143; Holton, op. cit., p. 35; Mohay, op. cit., p. 177; Spadaro, op. cit., p. 325.

37. For *ἐδῶκαν κονταρέας*, etc.: *War of Troy* 911 (cf. 2398-9), 3122 (cf. 7476-7), 3534 (cf. 8605), 3728 (cf. 9007), 3739 (cf. 9025), 4037 (cf. 9885), 4058 (cf. 9932), 4517 (cf. 10915), 4767 (cf. 11523-4), 5047 (cf. 12099), 6789 (cf. 15738-9), 6897 (cf. 15930), 7473 (cf. 17137), 7501 (cf. 17210-1), 9488 (cf. 21142), 10711 (cf. 23602-3), 10718 (cf. 23625), 10783 (cf. 23753-4), 10857 (cf. 23907), 11030 (cf. 24285). For *καὶ κονταρεῖν τοῦ ἔδωκεν*, etc.: 3042 (cf. 7309-10), 3479 (cf. 8496), 3791 (cf. 9140), 4139 (cf. 10081-2), 4488 (cf. 10854), 4705 (cf. 11364-5), 5066 (cf. 12136-8), 5988 (cf. 14005-6), 6215 (cf. 14461-3), 6743 (cf. 15642-4), 6843 (cf. 15834-5), 7549 (cf. 17299), 8140 (cf. 18608-9), 9666 (cf. 21494-6), 10315 (cf. 22723-5), 10731 (cf. 23650); for *κονταρεῖν ἐδώκασιν*, etc.: 987 (cf. 2560), 3522 (cf. 8579), 4431 (cf. 10697-8), 4447 (cf. 10735), 5026 (cf. 12051-2), 6773 (cf. 15692-4), 9398 (cf. 20991-2), 9714 (cf. 21577-8).

38. *Ach.* 1333, 1498; *Belis.* 456; *Chron. Mor.* 1123, 4020, 5034, 5123, 7047; *Imb.* 126, 311, 415; *Lib.* 2273, 2315, 3221; *Phlor.* 667; *Troas* 938.

the beginnings of most of the knightly combats that are so common in the remains of early demotic verse. In the *War of Troy*, the phrase is often parallel to the word 'lance' or one of its synonyms in the French original, but just as often there is only a verb indicating fighting, like 'joster'. In view of the other evidence for formulaic phrases in this genre of poetry, we have no hesitation in claiming that *ἐδῶκαν κονταρέας* was a part of the repertoire of many fourteenth-century oral poets. But cases like this, argued on the basis of numbers alone, are less satisfactory than those where one can point to qualitative evidence like the unusual nature of the phrase itself or of the contexts in which it is found.

This last category of evidence, the situations in which the formula is found, is rarely decisive in itself but can be a useful supplementary argument. For example, all but two of the 28 examples of the phrase *ἐκείνην τὴν ἡμέραν* found in the *War of Troy* refer to a day of battle,³⁹ in a way reminiscent of the English expression 'win the day'. Did the poet himself restrict the phrase to this context, or was this suggested to him by Benoit's division of his battles into days? There is some similar evidence from other poems, though it is much less clear than that from the *War of Troy* itself.⁴⁰ By reasoning in such a way, one may suggest a specific oral meaning even for this most simple and generalized of phrases.

The words *πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν*, found 18 times in the *War of Troy*,⁴¹ we have not found elsewhere, and so they will have no

39. 3072 (cf. 7372), 3166 (cf. 7545), 3181 (cf. 7565), 3188 (cf. 7585), 4152 (cf. 10110), 4627 (cf. 11201), 4761 (cf. 11509), 4807 (cf. 11596), 5344 (cf. 12718-20), 5350 (cf. 12731), 5996 (cf. 14014), 6194 (cf. 14894), 6229 (cf. 14507), 6830 (cf. 15809), 6896 (cf. 15930), 6929 (cf. 16008), 6942 (cf. 16029), 6950 (cf. 16037), 7148 (cf. 16373), 8292 (cf. 18968), 8380 (cf. 19090), 8930 (cf. 20020), 10328 (cf. 21754), 10820 (cf. 23818), 11916 (cf. 25756), 12636 (cf. 26940). The exceptions are: 6910 (cf. 15966), 13104 (cf. 27706).

40. See *Chron. Mor.* 1111, 1159; the phrase is used for a rest-day from battle at *Chron. Mor.* 1478, 5468, 8865; it can also be used in laments, for the dread day on which the City was captured or the leader slain: *Tam.* 7; *Thren.* 50, 62, 102.

41. 3132 (cf. 7497), 3468 (cf. 8463), 5204 (cf. 12424), 6034 (cf. 14091), 6774 (cf. 15698), 7499 (cf. 17208), 8199 (cf. 18783), 8982 (cf. 20128), 9194 (cf. 20482), 9415 (cf. 21024), 9462 (cf. 21101), 9478 (cf. 21123), 9985 (cf. 22192), 10345 (cf. 22704), 10712 (cf. 23605), 10728 (cf. 23639), 10891 (cf. 23970), 13926 (cf. 30106).

value as evidence unless their use within this poem is examined in some detail. We must divide the phrase into its two associated concepts: *πολλά* indicating a number, and *εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν* suggesting an event which happens quickly. Nine times in the French original corresponding to these Greek words there is a phrase which refers to a short period of time: 'En petit d'ore' (12424 = *War of Troy* 5204; 21101 = 9462; 23639 = 10728); 'En poi d'ore' (22192 = 9985; 23604 = 10711); 'En poi d'ore e en poi de tens' (21123 = 9478; 21000 = 9403); 'En poi de tens' (20482 = 9194); 'En mout poi d'ore' (21024 = 9415). The idea of number is even more pervasive: in 16 of the 19 cases there is a number or a word expressing number (tant, maint, mout) in the French text, reflected by a similar expression in Greek, nearly always found in the first half of the line which ends *πολλά εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν*. In fact in all 16 cases the number-word is translated separately into Greek, outside the *πολλά* of the formula. Further, when the two ideas appear together in the French they are rarely combined in such a way as to suggest translation by the Greek formula. They are often in different lines, divided by other parts of the sentence. *Πολλά εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν* has often the status of a comment added by the Greek translator without much motivation from the French original. Yet there is only one case where neither of these two ideas is present anywhere in the French to set off the Greek formula: 'La remestrent vuit le cheval' (23970), translated into Greek as *τὰς σέλας τοὺς εὐκαίρεσαν, πολλά εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν* (10891).

If one looks beyond these verbal triggers to the contexts in which the phrase is found, it is immediately clear that circumstances proved a more certain clue to its use than words. Each of these 19 phrases occurs at a moment of high military achievement. It is a formula to point to a Homeric *ἀρίστω*. The usual type is that like the achievement of the second Ajax – *πλέον τῶν εἴκοσι ἐσκότωσε, πολλά εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν* (10345) where there are numbers for his victims also in the French original ('Plus en a mort de vint e dous' 22794). But the situation is the same in the lines without numbers: at 9478–9 (cf. 21123–4) Achilles is routing the Trojans, while at 10728 (cf. 23639) Pentachilia (Penthesileia) is striding through the smaller combats after her triumph over Diomedes. In 10891, quoted above, Ajax is routing the Paphlagonians. It seems plain that the formula

means more to the poet, and is intended to convey more to his audience, than the sum of its words. It brings with it an automatic context – the climax of a battle. How could this association of ideas have arisen? It is tempting to speculate that it did not derive from the translator himself or a written source, but had been developed in his mind and the expectations of his audience under the influence of oral verse.⁴² The association would seem to us easier to understand if it predated the poem rather than developed in the course of the translation. However, in the absence of other surviving occurrences of the phrase outside the *War of Troy*, the argument is far from conclusive.

At first sight, the phrase *ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν σωμάτων*, found 13 times in the *War of Troy*⁴³ and not to our knowledge elsewhere, seems to belong to the same category as *πολλά εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν*. Ten of the examples occur in a battle context, with the ground strewn with dead bodies. In each of these cases, the noun *γῆ* and the verb *καταστρώνω* appear in the first half of the line, equally divided between active and passive constructions. The remaining three cases are found after the battle narrative, when the dead bodies are so decayed that they constitute a serious health hazard, and a truce is arranged for their removal. It seems therefore that this phrase brings with it two possible contextual associations rather than the single one of *πολλά εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν*. But when we examine the parallel phrases in the French original, we find that they are disturbingly close to the Greek. Ten times the French contains the word 'mort' ('morz'), while there are single examples of 'cors' and 'abatuz'. Of the ten cases where the line includes the word *καταστρώνω*, four are paralleled by 'couvrir' and four by 'jonchier'. 'Des morz est la terre coverte' occurs twice (15734, cf. 6788; 21122, cf. 9476), together with 'La terre est coverte des morz' (2617, cf. 1018), 'Tote la terre des morz cuevrent' (7246, cf. 3024), 'Des morz sont tuit li champ jonchie' (12837, cf. 5398), 'Des morz est toz li chans jonchiez' (16154, cf. 7004). This Greek phrase, whatever

42. This pattern of argument has been developed in connection with the Homeric poems; see e.g., M. N. Nagler, *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1974), pp. 27–63.

43. 1018 (cf. 2617), 3024 (cf. 7246), 5058 (cf. 12123–5), 5380 (cf. 12810–1), 5398 (cf. 12837), 6788 (cf. 15734), 6824 (cf. 15793–4), 7004 (cf. 16154), 7259 (cf. 16626), 8917 (cf. 20002–5), 9350 (cf. 20873–4), 9366 (cf. 20920–1), 9476 (cf. 21122).

its source, certainly corresponds rather closely to the French passages from which it was translated. While *πολλὰ εἰς ὀλίγην ὥραν* is frequently an addition to the Greek narrative, redundant in the sense that all the ideas of the French have been translated elsewhere into Greek, *ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν σωμάτων* is always an essential part of the translated text. In these circumstances it seems more probable that the formula was constructed by the translator on the basis of the French than that it was drawn from a Greek oral tradition.

This is even more likely with a pair of formulas which are among the most noticeable in the poem, those which make up the line *τὸ σκουτάρι ἐπέρασεν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ λουρίκι*. There are seven cases of this formula pair, singular and plural, with or without an indirect object pronoun.⁴⁴ Those who have read the poem will be surprised at this small number, because one has the impression that nearly every single combat includes this phrase, as a hero is killed or escapes with a wound. In fact, when one looks more closely, there are a further 9 cases where *σκουτάρι* and *περνῶ* appear in the first half of the line and *λουρίκι* in the second, e.g. *τὸ σκουτάρι (του) ἐπέρασεν καὶ ὄλον τὸ λουρίκι* (3142, 3612) and *περνάει τὸ σκουτάρι του ἀλλὰ (ὁμοίως) καὶ τὸ λουρίκι* (3410, 5032);⁴⁵ two more cases where *κόβω* is substituted for *περνῶ*, e.g. *τὸ σκουτάρι του ἔκοψαν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ λουρίκι* (4648);⁴⁶ and four cases where *σκουτάρι*, *περνῶ* and *λουρίκι* are all found grouped within a line and a half, e.g.

*περνάει τὸ σκουτάρι του ὄλον τὸ πανιτσέλι
εἰς τὸ λουρίκι τὸ καλὸν ἐτρίβη τὸ κοντάρι* (4720-1).⁴⁷

The two formulaic phrases here seem very unstable. Much more durable is the sequence of *σκουτάρι* and *λουρίκι*, usually accompanied by *περνῶ*.

Of the 22 French phrases parallel to those mentioned in the

44. *War of Troy* 3643 (cf. 8843-9), 3792 (cf. 9137-8), 4655 (cf. 11251-2), 6078 (cf. 14153-5), 6744 (cf. 15642-5), 6747 (cf. 15647-8), 10965 (cf. 24124-5).

45. See also *War of Troy* 3044 (cf. 7309-11), 4757 (cf. 11500-3), 4767 (cf. 11531-2), 5047 (cf. 12102), 7502 (cf. 17213).

46. See also *War of Troy* 11010 (cf. 24231-3).

47. *War of Troy* 4138-9 (cf. 10084-6), 7474-5 (cf. 17139-40), 3406-7 (cf. 8337-41).

last paragraph,⁴⁸ 21 contain the word 'escu' and one 'targe', leaving only one without an equivalent for *σκουτάρι*. Equally, 14 have the word 'hauberc', the direct equivalent of *λουρίκι*. Most of the rest refer to a second piece of armour, usually the helmet or gloves. The French passage is usually at least two lines, sometimes even four or five lines, regularly reduced to one in Greek. Repetition is rare in the French: 'E par l'auberc maillié menu' (8345, 11252) and 'E son (Li ot l') auberc si desmaillié' (9138, 10085). Thus, though formulas in the sense we have defined them above are almost completely absent, there is an underlying pattern of narration by which a knight's spear pierces first his opponent's shield and then another part of his armour, usually the breast-plate. There are several supporting examples of the pattern at points where they have not triggered the Greek formula.⁴⁹

Thus there is great similarity between the two poets in their approach to this battle segment. The content of the Greek formula and its associated phrases could easily be derived from a reading of the French. In fact, since we have found no similar phrases in other Greek poems, it is much more likely that these formulas are the translator's own coinage than that he derived them from oral poetry. Though it is worth repeating that the pressure demanding the creation of a formula for these actions must have been the pressure of a background oral tradition, the formula itself seems to have resulted from the poet's own reading of the French text.

In these last few pages we have attempted to define several stages on the continuum of formula types found in the *War of Troy*, and to give an example or two of each category, from those which we regard as certainly derived from an oral tradition to those which we believe to have been invented by the poet under oral pressure. For none of these stages have we attempted a complete list. The questions which we asked thus remain unanswered: it is not yet possible to use formula lists from this genre of poems to sketch out the subjects and narrative patterns

48. Add to those given in notes 44-7 above: 7513, 8344-5, 8784-5, 11239-40, 11394-7, 12059-62.

49. E.g. 14003-6, 21494-6, 2579-80; cf. the similar pattern where the spear pierces the shield but is *stopped* by the breastplate; e.g. 9012-3, 10697-700, 11359-63.

of the underlying oral tradition. We have not yet even been able to come to precise conclusions about the relationship of the *War of Troy* to this tradition. We cannot yet say where on the continuum the majority of its formulas lie – though we hope that we have provided a structure within which an answer may be built. All those who study early demotic verse accept that it contains some clichés, some phrases which recur so frequently throughout the corpus that they plainly had an independent existence beyond the particular examples which survive. The basic question which remains to be answered is how far this principle may be taken. Or to put it in the oral-formulaic terms used in this study: what proportion of the repetitions are the poets' own formulaic phrases, and what proportion did they take from oral tradition?

We have suggested that the *War of Troy* is a transitional text between oral and literary composition. The poet has adopted a formulaic style and many of the formulas themselves form a tradition of oral poetry; at the same time he seems to have added clichés of his own and to have used all his formulas in a literate manner in making a long translation from a French manuscript. It is worth adding here, as was mentioned in the case of the *Chronicle of the Morea*, that there are no units of oral organization longer than a pair of formulaic half-lines. The motifs and themes found in a wide range of oral poems ancient, mediaeval and modern, and often used as part of the definition of the oral style,⁵⁰ seem to have had little effect on the early demotic Greek tradition. We can do no more than suggest reasons for this lack. Perhaps thematic organization did exist in the pure oral form but has disappeared in the writing down. Perhaps this is the major effect of the partial transition to a conventional written literary form. In the case of the *War of Troy* and of other translations within this group of poems, one may suggest that the French (or Italian) original was an adequate guide for the structure of the narrative, freeing the poet from the need to rely on thematic construction.

50. This is stated or implied by, e.g., Lord, *Singer*, 68–98; A. C. Baugh, 'Improvisation in the Middle English Romance', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, CIII (1959), 440–54; K. Kailasapathy, *Tamil Heroic Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 187–228; J. J. Duggan, *The Song of Roland* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1973), pp. 160–212; B. Peabody, *The Winged Word* (Albany, 1975), pp. 179–215.

The examination of other similarly translated works is one of the ways in which the problems we have raised in this paper may be brought closer to solution. Their differing patterns of connection with their sources, particularly the ways in which Greek formulas are related to corresponding phrases in the originals, will serve to put into context the conclusions which we have drawn in this study. But above all, a collection must be made of the formulas which are common to several early demotic texts – and which must thus be ascribed to oral sources. A half-line found, say, more than once in each of three independent poems of this type is much more likely to have belonged to an oral tradition than to have been constructed independently three times, even if it is a somewhat banal expression. A collection of such phrases would help in the discussion of the nature of the tradition, its form and its subject matter. It would also be a useful means of preventing formulaic clichés being misused in discussion of literary indebtedness between these poems.

It is unfortunate that most of the early remains of demotic Greek survive in a literary (not to mention linguistic) form which is neither easy to evaluate nor attractive to the twentieth-century reader. The lack of literary originality in plot and use of language is rarely compensated by signs of non-literary liveliness and inspiration such as seem to survive in much Western mediaeval poetry. The reason, we would suggest, is that these poems are rarely directly based on genuine oral material. Thus the oral style is employed for a number of different purposes for which it is not fully appropriate. In this sense, we believe that most early demotic Greek literature consists of transitional texts. Research along the lines we have suggested will provide an analysis of the interaction between oral and written methods of composition which could be useful in other mediaeval literatures. It is unlikely to establish this genre as of high merit in literary terms but it will permit a much greater understanding of the poems and appreciation of the qualities which they do possess.

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The Rôle of Dance in the Ritual Therapy of the Anastenaria*

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The Anastenaria is a ritual involving trance and possession which is performed in several villages and towns in northern Greece.¹ It is a ritual system of psychotherapy which is often effective in treating illnesses that in Western psychiatric terms would be considered psychogenic in nature. This paper focuses on the rôle of the dance of the possessed Anastenarides in the therapeutic system of the Anastenaria. I hope to show that this dance contributes to the therapeutic effectiveness of the Anastenaria because it provides the Anastenarides with an opportunity to experience a cathartic release of anxiety, to structure this cathartic experience, and to transform a state of anxiety, suffering, and illness into a state of joy, power, and health.

The Anastenaria was performed in north-eastern Thrace near the Black Sea until 1913 when the present border between

* The field work upon which this paper is based was carried out among the Anastenarides of Ayia Eleni in the nome of Serres in Greek Macedonia between September 1975 and October 1976. This research was supported by grants from the National Science Foundation and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. I would like to thank Professor Vincent Crapanzano of Queens College for his many helpful suggestions as well as the residents of Ayia Eleni for their hospitality and cooperation. For a more detailed discussion of the Anastenaria as a ritual system of psychotherapy see L. Danforth, *The Anastenaria: A Study in Greek Ritual Therapy* (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1978).

1. Although the word 'Anastenaria' is plural in Greek, I use it in the singular in English to refer to an entire ritual complex seen as an integrated whole.

Turkey and Bulgaria was established. At this time a small area in north-eastern Thrace that had previously been Turkish territory fell permanently under Bulgarian control. Among the many Greeks who were forced to flee this area a year later were the Kostilides, residents of Kosti, the most important of the villages and towns where the Anastenaria was performed. The largest group of refugees from Kosti eventually settled in the village of Ayia Eleni in the nome of Serres, where the Anastenaria continues to be performed regularly.² The Anastenaria is also performed in the town of Langadas and in several other villages in Greek Macedonia where Kostilides have settled.

Although the Anastenaria is denounced by officials of the Greek Orthodox Church as a sacrilegious survival of pre-Christian idolatrous rites, it exists within the religious and cosmological context of the Orthodox Church and draws heavily on Orthodox symbolism, beliefs, and ritual practices.³

On certain important feast days in the calendar of the Greek Orthodox Church the Anastenarides of Ayia Eleni, approximately twelve women and two men, who are referred to collectively as the 'group of twelve' (*δωδεκάδα*), gather at the house of the chief Anastenaris (*ἀρχιαναστενάρης*). It is in this house, known as the *konaki*, that the Anastenarian icons of SS. Constantine and Helen are kept.⁴ These icons, which are said to have been miraculously revealed to the Anastenarides many years ago in Kosti, are kept on an 'icon shelf' (*στασίδι*) in the *konaki*. Each has a handle so that it may be carried easily during the dances and processions of the Anastenarides. These icons are partially enclosed in cloth coverings (*ποδιές*) to which are attached a great many votive offerings in the form of small metal

2. The village of Ayia Eleni, which in 1976 had a population of approximately seven hundred, is composed of several distinct ethnic groups, the most important of which are the Kostilides and the indigenous Macedonians. Ayia Eleni is a fairly wealthy agricultural village which lies within the irrigation network of the Strymon River.

3. For a clear statement of the position of the Greek Orthodox Church in regard to the Anastenaria see *Θρησκευτική και ήθική εγκυκλοπαίδεια*, III (Athens, 1963), pp. 634-7.

4. The word *konaki*, which is derived from the Turkish *konak* meaning 'mansion' or 'government house', was used by Greeks living in areas under Turkish rule to refer to the building which housed the local administrative authorities.

plaques (*ἀσημικά*). Carefully draped over the icons and the *stasidi* are many large red kerchiefs, known as *σημάδια*, which are associated with particular Anastenarian icons and which are believed to possess the power of those icons. To one side of the *stasidi* is a table where anyone entering the *konaki* may leave offerings of olive oil or incense and light a candle before he 'greet' (*χαίρει*) the Anastenarian icons and *simadia* and takes a seat on the low benches around the room.

The culmination of the yearly ritual cycle of the Anastenaria is the festival (*πανηγύρι*) of SS. Constantine and Helen, which begins on the eve of 21 May and continues for three days. Anastenarides and faithful Kostilides throughout Greek Macedonia gather at the *konaki* early on the eve of 21 May. Shortly thereafter at a signal from the *archianastenaris* the music of the three-stringed Thracian lyre (*λύρα*) and the large drum (*νταούλι*) begins, and the Anastenarides enter a state of trance and begin to dance.⁵ The Anastenarides believe that when they begin to dance St. Constantine 'seizes' or 'calls' them (*τοὺς πιάνει ὁ Ἅγιος, τοὺς καλεῖ ὁ Ἅγιος*), and that as long as they dance he is both in control of and responsible for all their actions. The Anastenarides may dance for twenty to thirty minutes. Then, after a short break, they dance again. This process continues until the ritual gathering breaks up at approximately midnight.

On the morning of 21 May the Anastenarides gather at the *konaki* and, accompanied by candle bearers and musicians, proceed to the sacred well (*ἀγίασμα*) at the edge of the village where they sacrifice a black lamb to St. Constantine. Throughout the day the Anastenarides dance in the *konaki*. Shortly after dark they are notified that the large fire which had been lit several hours earlier in a field near the *ayiasma* has burned down to form a huge mass of glowing red coals. Then they proceed barefoot from the *konaki* to the site of the fire, where several thousand people have gathered to witness the spectacular firewalk.

5. The dance of the Anastenarides is a uniquely sacred version of the common 'kerchief dance' (*μαντιλάτος χορός*), which in this context is danced individually. At the *konaki* and during the firewalk it is danced to a tune with a 2/4 rhythm known as 'the tune of the dance' (*ὁ σκοπὸς τοῦ χοροῦ*), while during the processions of the Anastenarides from one place to another it is danced to a tune with a 7/8 rhythm known as 'the tune of the road' (*ὁ σκοπὸς τοῦ δρόμου*).

As the Anastenarides, fifteen to twenty in number, approach the fire, several men spread out the mound of coals with long wooden poles until it forms a large oval bed about three metres wide, eight metres long, and several centimetres deep. Then the Anastenarides enter the fire, carrying icons and *simadia* of SS. Constantine and Helen. They dance back and forth across the coals, stirring up showers of sparks and glowing embers with their feet. Some Anastenarides bend down at the edge of the fire and pound the coals with their open palms, shouting, 'May it turn to ashes' (*Στάχτη νὰ γίνει*). They continue dancing until the fire is completely extinguished and nothing remains but a bed of harmless grey ash. Then they return to the *konaki*, where a meal is served to all present.

During the next two days of the *paniyiri* the Anastenarides, with the icons and *simadia* of SS. Constantine and Helen, proceed through the village visiting every house. The *paniyiri* concludes with a second firewalk on the evening of 23 May. The Anastenarides, who see themselves as servants of St. Constantine, believe that they alone are able to perform the firewalk without being burned because they are protected by St. Constantine's supernatural power.⁶

The Anastenaria is above all a system of ritual therapy concerned with the diagnosis and treatment of a wide variety of illnesses. It is, however, only one of many therapeutic systems that are available to the residents of Ayia Eleni. The decision of a sick person to consult either a university trained physician, a village folk healer (*πρακτικός*), or the *archianastenaris* is influenced by many factors, including the nature of his symptoms, his own opinion as to the cause of his illness, and certain other considerations specifically related to the Anastenaria which will be discussed shortly.

The patient may resort to several different therapeutic systems simultaneously, or one after the other, in an attempt to find a cure. He is likely to suspect that his illness is associated with the

6. The most useful accounts of the Anastenaria by Greek folklorists are the following: K. Romaios, *Λαϊκές λατρείες της Θράκης*, *Ἀρχεῖον τοῦ Θρακικοῦ Λαογραφικοῦ καὶ Γλωσσικοῦ Θησαυροῦ*, XI (1944-5), 1-131; G. Megas, *Ἀναστενάρια καὶ ἔθιμα τῆς Τυρινῆς Δευτέρας*, *Λαογραφία*, XIX (1961), 472-534; K. Kakouri, *Διονυσιακά* (Athens, 1963); and a series of articles by P. Papachristodoulou and others that appeared in *Ἀρχεῖον τοῦ Θρακικοῦ Λαογραφικοῦ καὶ Γλωσσικοῦ Θησαυροῦ* between 1934 and 1961.

Anastenaria if he exhibits any of the following symptoms: unusual, obsessive, or deviant behaviour, particularly of a religious nature, or involving fire; persistent dreams or visions concerning the Anastenaria; periods of unconsciousness, paralysis, or involuntary and uncontrolled activity; or states of depression or anxiety characterized by general malaise and an inability to eat, sleep, or work. An initial diagnosis that a person is suffering from an illness associated with the Anastenaria is strengthened if he is an *ἀκραμπᾶς*, that is, if he is a descendant of an Anastenaris or of someone who is responsible for the care of an Anastenarian icon.⁷ It is also strengthened if he is known to have ridiculed the Anastenaria or if the onset of his symptoms happened to coincide with an important ritual gathering of the Anastenarides.

When such a diagnosis is made, it is said that the individual 'is suffering from the saint' (*ὀποφέρει ἀπ' τὸν Ἅγιο*), or that he 'is suffering from those things' (*ὀποφέρει ἀπ' αὐτὰ τὰ πράματα*), that is, from the Anastenaria. The patient or a member of his family must then consult the *archianastenaris*, who usually suggests that the Anastenarides gather at the patient's house. After the patient has discussed with them the onset of his illness and his present condition, an Anastenarissa may suddenly begin to rock back and forth in her seat and clap violently several times or jump to her feet and dance for a few seconds. She will then shout out a command to the patient. This command is believed to be an expression of the will of St. Constantine. The Anastenarissa is said to speak 'with the power of the saint' (*μὲ τὴ δύναμη τοῦ Ἁγίου*).

The utterances of the Anastenarides are invariably orders to correct some 'ritual fault' (*σφάλμα*) committed by the patient or a member of his family, or to serve the saint by the performance of some ritual task. For example, the patient may be told that in order to regain his health he must repaint his family icon, that he must sacrifice a lamb to St. Constantine, or that he must serve the saint by regularly attending the ritual gatherings of the Anastenarides. The saint is believed to have caused the patient's suffering in order to force him to act to correct his ritual fault or to serve the saint in the desired manner. When the patient carries out the instructions of the Anastenarides, or when he merely

7. The word *akrabas* is derived from the Turkish *akraba* meaning 'relatives'.

agrees to carry them out, he often experiences an improvement in his condition. This improvement is attributed to the beneficent power of St. Constantine, who, it is believed, has forgiven the patient for the commission of his ritual fault and is pleased with his subsequent service to the Anastenaria. Regardless of the specific recommendations of the Anastenarides, a patient who believes that he has been cured by St. Constantine usually feels obligated to attend the ritual gatherings of the Anastenarides. Quite often he is subsequently 'seized' or 'called' by the saint, begins to dance, and becomes an Anastenaris himself.⁸

This process of diagnosis and therapy is illustrated by the following accounts of how two people, whom I shall call Maria and Kostas, became involved with the Anastenaria.

Maria was married when she was nineteen. She went to live in a small house with her husband and her mother-in-law. Several months later her mother died. Then Maria fell ill. She was sick for three years and suffered a great deal. She didn't want to eat or drink; all she did was lie in bed. Her husband and her mother-in-law would put her in a cart to take her to the doctor in Serres. As soon as they were outside of the village, she would feel much better; but she was ashamed to tell anyone. When they reached Serres, the doctor would say that there was nothing wrong with her and that she should go to some churches to seek help.

Her aunt, who was an Anastenarissa, would often come to her house when Maria was sick. She would tell Maria that she was suffering from 'those things' [the Anastenaria]. She was suffering because Saint Constantine wanted her to serve him. Other Anastenarides would also come to her house to visit her. While they were in the house, she felt better; but when they left, she felt worse.

Finally her mother-in-law invited all the Anastenarides to come to her house. They said that in order for Maria to get well she must come regularly to the *konaki* and serve the saint. Her father was there too, so he gave his opinion. He said that

8. If a patient carries out the recommendations of the Anastenarides and yet fails to experience any improvement in his condition, he may invite the Anastenarides to his house again. They will either recommend a new course of action or tell him that he is not in fact 'suffering from the saint' and that he should consult a physician.

he was against the Anastenaria and that he would rather see his daughter in the graveyard than see her dancing in the *konaki*. But her mother-in-law said, 'Now her husband and I are in charge of her.' So Maria's father left, since there was nothing more he could do. Then the *archianastenaris* said, 'You will get up, and you will come all by yourself to the *paniyiri*.' From that time on she gradually got better. At the very first *paniyiri* she attended, she danced and entered the fire. She has performed the firewalk every year since then, and she has remained healthy.

During the Balkan Wars Kostas was sent into exile in Asia Minor. He was separated from his parents and brothers and never saw any of them again. When he returned to Bulgaria, he got married and had a child. Then he was forced to serve in the Bulgarian army for three years. During this time his wife and child died. When he was released from the army, he married a woman who was known to be barren.

After Kostas and his wife arrived in Ayia Eleni, they adopted a child. Kostas was a good man. He worked hard in his fields; he enjoyed hunting and fishing; and he spent his evenings in the coffeehouse with the other men of the village.

But then he began to suffer. He became melancholy and introverted. He was afraid of everything. He was even afraid to go out to work in his fields. He couldn't work; he couldn't eat; and he couldn't sleep. He didn't want to talk to people. He stopped going to the coffeehouse and just stayed home all the time. When people came to visit him, he wouldn't talk to them at all. He wouldn't even acknowledge their presence. He would just get wild and angry. Sometimes he didn't even recognize people.

In the evenings he would run off into the fields or to the church and sleep there alone; or else he would lock his wife out of his house and sleep alone there. During the day he would just sit at home. He was completely illiterate, but he taught himself how to read. He read the Bible and various prayer books all day.

Sometimes he would leave his house and run to the river at the edge of the village. From there he would run to the *konaki* where he would cross himself repeatedly and kiss the icons. From there he would go into the fields to the graveyard and

then to the church where he would light candles and pray. Then he would go back to his house and read.

This lasted for three years. During this period he called the Anastenarides several times. They would meet at his house and each time an Anastenaris would tell him something different to do. One time he was told to build a *stasidi* for his family icons. He built one, but he didn't get well. Finally the *archianastenaris* told him that he had to fix an old Anastenarian icon of Saints Constantine and Helen which had been partially destroyed and hidden in a trunk in a *konaki* in another village. After several attempts he finally found the icon and brought it to an icon painter in Serres, who repaired the icon and repainted it. But the icon was not properly painted, and so Kostas got worse instead of better. Then he took the icon back to the painter to have it painted properly.

A few months later at the *paniyiri* of Saints Constantine and Helen he was at the *konaki* with the other Anastenarides when he suddenly ran from the *konaki* and went to the site of the firewalk. He went running into the fire while the flames were still shoulder high. People couldn't even see him. Everyone thought he would die. But he came out of the fire unharmed. He became an Anastenaris, and since then he has been fine.

Every year since then he has danced in the fire. He doesn't hunt any more, and he doesn't go to the coffeehouse as often as he used to. He prefers to stay home and read the Bible. He has become a very religious man.

Rituals involving trance and possession are performed in many societies throughout the world.⁹ It is widely accepted that

9. For the conceptual distinction which is usually made between trance (a psychobiological condition characterized by dissociation, loss of control, and hypersuggestibility) and possession (the cultural interpretation or explanation of such a state), see A. F. C. Wallace, 'Cultural Determinants of Response to Hallucinatory Experience', *A.M.A. Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1 (1959), 74-85 and I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Baltimore, 1971), pp. 37-65. Important studies of rituals involving trance and possession in various parts of the world include: J. Belo, *Trance in Bali* (New York, 1960); V. Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha: A Study in Moroccan Ethnopsychiatry* (Berkeley, 1973); H. Jeanmaire, *Dionysos: histoire du culte de Bacchus* (Paris, 1951); W. La Barre, *They Shall Take Up Serpents: Psychology of the Southern Snake Handling Cult* (New York, 1969); and A. Metraux, *Voodoo in Haiti* (New York, 1959).

such rituals are often therapeutically effective in the treatment of illness of a psychogenic nature, which may be caused at least in part by persistent anxieties and tensions that result from situations involving psychological or sociocultural conflict.¹⁰ Explanations for the therapeutic effectiveness of these rituals have stressed a variety of factors, some of which play an important part in Western systems of psychotherapy.

Group support is often cited as a therapeutic factor which is essential to the effectiveness of many non-Western systems of psychotherapy.¹¹ The patient receives attention, comfort, and sympathy from members of the cult group of which he becomes a member in the course of treatment. In the case of the Anastenaria a person who is believed to be 'suffering from the saint' is visited frequently by individual Anastenarides, who assure him that he has nothing to worry about, that St. Constantine will help him, and that he will soon recover. In addition, becoming an Anastenaris may actually mobilize group support in such a way as to rearticulate the patient's important social relationships and 'reduce socially generated tensions that are in part responsible for the patient's condition'.¹² For example, a patient often requires the help of his relatives in correcting the ritual fault which is held responsible for his illness. Similarly, in order for a woman to become an Anastenarissa and to dance publicly in the *konaki*, her husband and sometimes even her parents or her parents-in-law must give her their permission. In this way important members of the woman's family demonstrate their concern for her in a public context and commit themselves to assisting her in her attempt to regain her health by giving her permission to become an Anastenarissa and to dance. If a woman is unable to become an

10. See the contributions in *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, ed. V. Crapanzano and V. Garrison (New York, 1977). In the case of the Anastenaria, the following anxiety-provoking situations are often partially responsible for the psychogenic illnesses treated by the Anastenaria: the death of a parent or other close relative, the difficult relationship between stepchild and stepparent, and marriage, especially for a woman, who is separated from her family of origin and brought to live with her in-laws in the house of her husband.

11. S. Messing, 'Group Therapy and Social Status in the Zar Cult of Ethiopia', in *Culture and Mental Health*, ed. M. K. Opler (New York, 1959), p. 326; J. G. Kennedy, 'Nubian Zar Ceremonies as Psychotherapy', *Human Organization*, XXVI (1967), 101.

12. Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha*, p. 215.

Anastenarissa because her husband does not believe in the rite and refuses to let her dance, then she will continue to suffer, since her husband has interfered with the will of St. Constantine.

Also of therapeutic importance is the fact that ritual systems of therapy such as the Anastenaria provide the patient with a conceptual framework for the interpretation of what would otherwise be chaotic and threatening phenomena associated with his illness.¹³ Not only does the patient receive an explanation for the cause of his illness, but a course of action is prescribed to him which, it is believed, will bring about a cure. The miraculous performances of the firewalk demonstrate the validity of the belief system of the Anastenaria, while the successful cures of other cult members, which are narrated in great detail at ritual gatherings in the *konaki*, attest to the effectiveness of the ritual therapy it provides. In this way the patient's feelings of anxiety and helplessness associated with his ignorance of his illness's cause and cure are relieved, since he now knows specifically why he is ill and what he must do to get well.

The fact that the patient is provided with a new social status when he becomes a member of a cult group such as the Anastenaria is also of therapeutic importance.¹⁴ Corresponding to this change in social status is a change in social identity and self-image.¹⁵ Within the community of those who believe in the Anastenaria, the new Anastenaris enjoys increased prestige and respect since he now has access to the superantural power of St. Constantine.

Trance also plays an essential part in the therapeutic system of rituals such as the Anastenaria. Particular attention has been paid to the cathartic function of these trance experiences.¹⁶ It is often claimed that trance experiences interpreted as spirit

13. W. and F. Mischel, 'Psychological Aspects of Spirit Possession', *American Anthropologist*, LX (1958), 256; J. Frank, *Persuasion and Healing* (Baltimore, 1969), p. 63.

14. Mischel, op. cit., p. 254; Messing, op. cit., p. 320; and J. Koss, 'Therapeutic Aspects of Puerto Rican Cult Practices', *Psychiatry*, XXXVIII (1975), 160.

15. Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha*, p. 219.

16. A. F. C. Wallace, *Culture and Personality* (New York, 1970), p. 236; R. H. Prince, 'Forward', in *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, ed. Crapanzano and Garrison, p. xiii.

possession are of therapeutic value because they periodically provide opportunities for the cathartic expression of behaviour which is usually socially unacceptable or unavailable. At such times one is able to enact behaviour which ranges from the passively dependent, to the sexually seductive, to the violently aggressive. Rituals involving trance and possession provide a context in which such behaviour may receive socially sanctioned expression because the possessing spirit, not the possessed individual, is held responsible.

All too often, however, explanations of the therapeutic value of the catharsis provided by such trance experiences have been phrased in a vague and superficial manner. The efficacy of the catharsis provided by rituals such as the Anastenaria has been explained in terms of a 'discharge of tension',¹⁷ a 'letting off of steam',¹⁸ and as a 'safety valve'.¹⁹ As Young has pointed out, a significant weakness of attempts to explain the therapeutic effectiveness of rituals involving trance and possession has been 'their proclivity to use the concept of catharsis in an uncritical and reductionistic way'.²⁰

Investigations of the role of hypnotic trance in Western systems of psychotherapy have suggested that the cathartic outbursts of intense emotion and motor discharge that often characterize hypnotic as well as ritually induced trance states are not necessarily of therapeutic value in and of themselves.²¹ In order for such outbursts, which represent 'the dramatic reliving of repressed traumatic memories together with their painful and conflict-laden affect', to be of positive therapeutic value, they must be structured in such a way that an 'emotionally meaningful reconstitution takes place'.²² The process of structuring these cathartic outbursts takes place in the carefully controlled context of the patient-therapist relationship in the

17. S. and R. Freed, 'Spirit Possession as Illness in a North Indian Village', *Ethnology*, III (1964), 166.

18. *Spirit Mediumship and Society in Africa*, ed. J. Beattie and J. Middleton (London, 1969), p. xxviii.

19. Kennedy, 'Nubian Zar Ceremonies as Psychotherapy', p. 189.

20. A. Young, 'Why Amhara Get Kureynya: Sickness and Possession in an Ethiopian Cult', *American Ethnologist*, II (1975), 568.

21. M. Gill and M. Brenman, *Hypnosis and Related States: Psychoanalytic Studies in Regression* (New York, 1966), p. 356.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 3 and 329.

case of Western systems of psychotherapy as well as in the highly structured ritual contexts of the Anastenaria and other non-Western systems of psychotherapy.

Rituals such as the Anastenaria furnish the suffering individual with a set of symbols with which he is able not only to articulate and give expression to the psychological and sociocultural conflicts which may have been partially responsible for his illness,²³ but also to resolve them symbolically by structuring the outburst of emotions associated with them. The process by which a ritual resolution of symbolically expressed conflict is able to bring about a structurally similar resolution at the psychological, sociocultural, and perhaps even the physiological level has been examined by Lévi-Strauss in his article 'The Effectiveness of Symbols'.²⁴

According to Lévi-Strauss, ritual systems of psychotherapy provide the patient with 'a language, by means of which unexpressed, and otherwise inexpressible, psychic states can be immediately expressed'. This makes it possible for the patient to 'undergo in an ordered and intelligible form a real experience that would otherwise be chaotic and inexpressible'. During the course of the therapeutic process the patient's experience becomes structured as he 'receives from the outside a social myth which does not correspond to a former personal state'. The patient's psychological and sociocultural reality is made to conform to this social myth, a myth which, unlike the patient's former personal state, is free from conflict. The ability of ritual systems of psychotherapy to structure the patient's psychological and sociocultural reality in accordance with a conflict-free social myth is attributed by Lévi-Strauss to 'the effectiveness of symbols'. According to Lévi-Strauss the effectiveness of symbols consists in the 'inductive property' that 'guarantees the harmonious parallel development' of structures in different orders of reality.²⁵

I now propose to examine the role of dance in the ritual therapy of the Anastenaria in light of the theoretical framework outlined above. I hope to demonstrate that the dance of an Anastenaris is an expression of the anxiety and tension which

are associated with the conflicts which may have been partially responsible for his illness and that it provides him with an opportunity to experience motor discharge and a cathartic release of intense emotion. I also hope to demonstrate that this dance is able to structure this outburst in such a way as to render it therapeutically effective. Thus the dance of the possessed Anastenaris is both a symptom of his illness and an essential part of his cure. This therapeutic process will be examined both as it takes place over the course of the entire career of an Anastenaris (which extends from the initial diagnosis that he is suffering from the Anastenaria and which culminates when he is a well-respected member of the *dodekada*), and as it takes place over the course of a single dance.

A person who is suffering from an illness which is believed to have been caused by St. Constantine often shows signs of being possessed when the Anastenarides gather at his house in order to determine the cause of his illness. In such cases he may cry, tremble, or gesticulate in a manner suggestive of the dance of the Anastenarides. At these first signs of possession the *archianastenaris* 'marks' (*σημαδεύει*) him by placing a *simadi* over his shoulder or around his neck, indicating that from this point on he is in the process of becoming an Anastenaris and has an obligation to attend the ritual gatherings of the Anastenarides.

The initial trance experiences of an Anastenaris are often extremely difficult and unpleasant. It is said that he is suffering because St. Constantine is punishing or torturing him. His behaviour at this point is frequently wild, violent, or clumsy. Gradually, however, with the help of other, more experienced Anastenarides he begins to enter trance more easily and to dance more gracefully and freely. He 'learns to be possessed'.²⁶ This is the point at which a person actually becomes an Anastenaris, or, as the Kostilides say, the point at which he 'comes out [as an] Anastenaris' (*Βγαίνει Αναστενάρης*). From this point on the dance of the Anastenaris is no longer associated with punishment and suffering, but with joy and happiness. When the Anastenaris is dancing freely and easily, it is said that he is dancing 'with the power of the saint'.

This is also the point at which the Anastenaris is likely to

23. Crapanzano, *The Hamadsha*, p. 5.

24. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology* (New York, 1963), pp. 186-205.

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 198-201.

26. Crapanzano, 'Introduction', in *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, ed. Crapanzano and Garrison, p. 15.

situate his cure. The characteristic phrase of an Anastenaris describing how he became involved with the Anastenaria is: 'And then I came out, I danced, and I got well' (*Καὶ τότε βγήκα, χόρεψα, καὶ ἔγινα καλά*). Just as the dance of the Anastenaris is transformed from suffering to joy, from punishment to power, so his state of illness is transformed into a state of health. As long as the Anastenaris continues to fulfill his ritual obligations to St. Constantine by participating regularly in the ritual gatherings of the Anastenaria, he will remain healthy.

That the process of becoming an Anastenaris provides a person with an opportunity to experience a cathartic release of the anxiety and tension associated with the conflicts that may have caused his illness is suggested by the image of 'coming out' which is regularly used to describe this process. Another image which emphasizes the fact that becoming an Anastenaris is a process of emerging, opening up, or being released from confinement is the image of the 'open road'. When an Anastenaris is finally able to dance freely and easily, it is said that St. Constantine 'has opened a road for him' (*τοῦ ἀνοίξε δρόμο*), or that 'his road was open' (*ὁ δρόμος του ἦταν ἀνοιχτός*). This image refers to the 'course' or 'path' a person follows in the process of becoming an Anastenaris and regaining his health. The same image is used in reference to the performance of any particular act associated with the Anastenaria. Thus an Anastenaris may say, 'I had a road to dance', or 'I had a road to enter the fire', implying that he had the power of the saint to do so.

If a young woman is experiencing a difficult trance and is unable to dance easily and freely, it is said that she has some 'obstacle' (*ἐμπόδιο*), or that 'something is preventing her' from becoming an Anastenarissa (*κάτι τὴν ἐμποδίζει*). The cause of this obstruction may be some ritual fault or the unwillingness of her husband to give her permission to dance.²⁷ In such cases she

27. Frequently the ritual fault itself involves the improper confinement or obstruction of an object sacred to St. Constantine. For example, an *ayiasma* may have been stopped up, or a piece of furniture may have been placed in front of an icon shelf. The correction of this ritual fault involves the release from confinement of the sacred object or the removal of that which is obstructing it. This process symbolizes the release of the supernatural power of St. Constantine and the cathartic release of becoming an Anastenaris which this power brings about.

continues to suffer because she is unable to 'come out' and experience the cathartic release provided by the dance. One young woman, who had experienced particularly difficult trance states until her husband finally gave her permission to dance, described her experience as follows:

When I started to dance, I suffered a great deal. I was not able to dance comfortably. It was as if there were chains on my feet. I wasn't free. Then when my husband gave me permission to dance, my feet were untied. I was set free, and I danced.

The importance of the type of cathartic release which is involved in the process of becoming an Anastenaris is recognized by the Kostilides themselves. Like villagers in other parts of Greece, they believe that there is a close relationship between an individual's emotional state and his state of health.²⁸ Kostilides believe that a wide variety of symptoms ranging from general malaise to deviant or 'crazy' behaviour, which are attributed to an illness known as *νευρικὰ* ('a nervous disorder' or 'a nervous condition'), are caused by the harmful effects of emotions such as anxiety, grief, despair, or anger on the 'nervous system' (*νευρικὸ σύστημα*).²⁹ Kostilides emphasize that if a person 'collects' (*μαζεθεῖ*) or 'swallows' (*καταπίνει*) such emotions and if he is unable to express or give vent to them, then he may become sick. As one woman from Ayia Eleni told me:

If you keep all your anxieties inside you, you can suffer a nervous breakdown (*νευρικὸ κλονισμό*). In order for anxiety,

28. R. and E. Blum, *Health and Healing in Rural Greece* (Stanford, 1965), p. 122.

29. The obvious similarity between the symptoms of people suffering from *nevroika* and those of people 'suffering from the saint' is recognized by the Kostilides. However, these two 'illnesses' are mutually exclusive according to the diagnostic categories of the Kostilides. If someone experiencing any of the above symptoms is cured after consulting a 'neurologist-psychiatrist', then it is clear that he was suffering from *nevroika*. If, however, he is cured after carrying out the recommendations of the Anastenarides, or if he actually becomes an Anastenaris, then it is clear that he was 'suffering from the saint'. In fact, Kostilides say that a person who is 'suffering from the saint' is not 'sick' (*ἀρρωστος*) and that he 'has no illness' (*δὲν ἔχει ἀσθένεια*), since an 'illness', strictly speaking, is something that can be treated by a doctor.

anger, or depression to pass, you have to leave your house, go outside, and talk to people. If you don't give vent to your emotions, they can drive you crazy.

Kostilides generally agree that women are more likely to suffer from *nevrika* than men are because it is much more difficult for women to experience the type of cathartic release needed to render these emotions harmless. This in turn is attributed by both men and women to the confined nature of the lives women lead. In her daily activities a woman is 'shut in' (*κλεισμένη*), 'restricted' (*περιορισμένη*), and 'withdrawn' (*συμμαζεμένη*). A man, unlike a woman, can go out in the evening to relax and forget his worries by drinking and talking with his friends. This confinement, which is stressed by women as such an important feature of their lives, is believed to be responsible for the harmful build-up of anxiety and tension, which may often cause illness.³⁰

By becoming an Anastenaris a person is able to emerge from a condition of confinement associated with anxiety and illness and enjoy a cathartic release of emotion which may be of therapeutic value. However, as has been suggested above, from the point of view of Western theories of psychotherapy, more important than the cathartic experience itself is the manner in which it is structured by virtue of the fact that it takes place in the highly patterned ritual context of the Anastenaria. Here I can only suggest briefly the many ways in which such cathartic experiences are structured by the Anastenaria over the course of the career of an Anastenaris before I turn to a more detailed examination of the therapeutic process as it takes place over the course of a single dance of a possessed Anastenaris.

We have already seen that as an Anastenaris gains experience year after year, his behaviour while possessed gradually becomes more structured; his dancing becomes more graceful and easy. While a young, inexperienced Anastenaris may enter trance and begin to dance before the music starts and may

30. The close association of images of confinement with feelings of anxiety and hence with the illnesses such feelings may cause is indicated by the fact that the word most frequently used by villagers to describe feelings of anxiety or worry is *στενοχώρια* (from *στενός* and *χώρος*), which literally means 'narrowness' or 'lack of space'.

continue to dance long after it has stopped, a more experienced Anastenaris is apt to begin and end his dance with the music. Another aspect of the structuring process that takes place over the course of the career of an Anastenaris is the creation of a positive symbiotic relationship between the Anastenaris and St. Constantine.³¹ During this process the saint is transformed from a malevolent figure who punishes the Anastenaris by causing illness into a benevolent one who restores him to a state of health and protects him during the firewalk.

The concept of St. Constantine himself also structures the trance experiences of the Anastenaris and plays an important part in bringing about his cure. As he is repeatedly possessed, the Anastenaris gradually internalizes elements of the personality or character of St. Constantine as well as the religious and moral ideals of his society which St. Constantine represents. In this way, over the course of his career, his cathartic experiences are structured, and a state of illness and suffering is transformed into a state of health in which he has access to supernatural power.

This structuring process and the transformation it brings about, which have been examined as they take place on a large time scale over a period of several years, also take place on a much smaller time scale each time an Anastenaris is possessed by St. Constantine and dances. The process is most intense, and the transformation most extreme, during the dance in which a person actually 'comes out' and becomes an Anastenaris, although it takes place in a less obvious form each subsequent time he dances.

Whenever the Anastenarides gather in the *konaki* to dance, the lyre player begins to play a slow, seemingly rhythmless tune and to sing a plaintive song about a Greek woman who is separated from her family and home when she is abducted by a Turk.³² Anastenarides who were previously conversing casually among themselves become sad and quiet. Some stare despondently at the floor, while others begin to cry. The atmosphere in the *konaki*

31. Crapanzano, 'Introduction', in *Case Studies in Spirit Possession*, ed. Crapanzano and Garrison, p. 15.

32. For the texts of this and other songs sung during the ritual gatherings of the Anastenaria, see Megas, *Ἀναστενάρια καὶ ἔθιμα τῆς Τυρινῆς Δευτέρας*, pp. 487-90.

is one of intense and anxious expectation. The legs of one Anastenarissa may begin to tremble, her knees striking against each other at a speed well beyond the range of voluntary behaviour. Another Anastenaris may suddenly begin to rock back and forth in his seat, pounding his knees violently with his fists. Anastenarides report that at this time they experience feelings of anxiety, dizziness, and tightness in the chest and throat.

Then suddenly with a piercing shout an Anastenaris may jump up and begin to dance. At this point the lyre player begins to play the faster, more rhythmic 'tune of the dance'. He is joined by the drum player, who begins to beat out a loud rhythm.³³ Soon other Anastenarides enter trance and begin to dance. Frequently the early portions of the dance of the Anastenarides are characterized by wild, violent, and spasmodic movements. For example, an Anastenarissa may begin to writhe and twist in her seat and then fall to the floor where she continues to bounce up and down, dragging herself across the floor with her legs extended out in front of her. It is said that she 'is dancing sitting down' (*χορεύει καθιστή*). Like the period of illness which precedes becoming an Anastenaris, this portion of the individual dance of an Anastenaris is described as a period of suffering and is attributed to the fact that St. Constantine is punishing him.

Other Anastenarides try to ease the suffering of an Anastenaris who is experiencing a difficult trance by comforting him and helping him achieve a transition to a more satisfying trance experience. They try to help him dance more easily by dancing directly in front of him, by shaking him in time to the music, or by placing an arm around his shoulder and dancing with him, teaching him in effect how to dance. Gradually he begins to perform what could more properly be called a dance. He stands upright and moves his feet in time to the music in proper dance steps, clapping, bending low at the waist, or waving with his arm away from his body in a manner characteristic of the dance of the possessed Anastenarides.

At this point the dancing Anastenaris receives from the

33. The importance of drumming in rituals involving trance and possession is discussed in A. Neher, 'A Physiological Explanation of Unusual Behaviour in Ceremonies Involving Drums', *Human Biology*, XXXIV (1962), 151-60.

archianastenaris an icon or *simadi* of SS. Constantine and Helen, which he holds for the remainder of his dance. He now dances proudly, even defiantly, holding the icon high over his head, or calmly and peacefully, cradling the icon in his arms. Receiving the icon or *simadi* in his hands symbolizes for the Anastenaris his acquisition of the supernatural power of St. Constantine. It is this power which brings about the transformation of a dance which is an expression of anxiety and suffering into a dance which is an expression of health and joy. This transformation was described by one Anastenarissa as follows: 'It is impossible for you to understand how much the Anastenarissa suffers until she takes the icon in her hands. Then she dances satisfied and pleased.'³⁴

Anastenarides report that when the power of St. Constantine comes to them, they experience it as a cool breeze or as an electric shock. They say that when they dance freely and easily they feel light, calm, and joyful. An image frequently used by the Anastenarides to describe this type of dance is that of 'flying like a bird'.³⁵ With a successful dance the anxiety of an Anastenaris 'leaves' or 'goes out' (*βγαίνει ή στενοχώρια*). The Anastenaris is able to 'get out' or 'remove' whatever was causing his anxiety (*να βγάλει τὸ κακό*). Anastenarides often say that they dance 'in order to vent their emotions' (*για να ξεσπάσουν*). This phrase, which literally means 'to burst out', clearly suggests a cathartic release from confinement associated with anxiety.

The therapeutic effectiveness of this dance is not limited to the context of gatherings of the Anastenarides at the *konaki* on specific ritual occasions. Any time an Anastenaris experiences severe anxiety or tension, he may enter trance and begin to dance. Consider the following comments of a young woman who had recently become an Anastenarissa and who was in mourning over the death of a young nephew.

Sometimes when I sit at home all by myself, I get very upset. Anxiety grips me (*Μὲ σφίγγει ή στενοχώρια*). I feel just the way I do before I begin to dance at the *konaki*. It is the anxiety of

34. P. Kavakopoulos, *Η τρίτη ημέρα τῶν Ἀναστεναεῶν*, Ἀρχεῖον τοῦ Θρησκευτικοῦ Λαογραφικοῦ καὶ Γλωσσικοῦ Θησαυροῦ, XXI (1956), 283.

35. One elderly Anastenarissa, discussing dream symbolism, said that if one dreams that one is flying, it means that one is free of sin and anxiety.

the dance. Once I was so overcome by anxiety that all I wanted to do was to light the oil lamp above my icon. I lit it, and then I began to dance. My husband came in and tried to stop me because he thought it would upset me even more; but I just pushed him away and continued to dance. After a while I stopped dancing. My worries had passed. They had passed with the help of Saint Constantine.

Other Kostilides report similar cases in which Anastenarides danced on non-ritual occasions in their homes during times of severe stress. One woman recalled that during World War II, when the village of Ayia Eleni was occupied by the Bulgarians, her aunt, who was an Anastenarissa, would dance in her house in front of her family icons. A young Anastenaris said that while he was living in Germany working in a factory he would occasionally become lonely and depressed and begin to cry. He would dance for a short time. Then his wife would light some incense, and he would stop dancing and calm down. Similarly, a young university educated woman said that in times of stress, when she took her entrance examinations for the university, for example, or when someone in her family was seriously ill, her grandmother, who was an Anastenarissa, would dance in front of the family icons. When she finished dancing, she would comfort the other members of the family, assuring them that everything would be all right.

The dance of the Anastenarides is, on the one hand, expressive or symptomatic of feelings associated with suffering and anxiety, and yet, on the other hand, it is expressive of the very opposite – feelings of joy, happiness, and power associated with the relief of suffering and the resolution of anxiety. This ambivalent quality of the dance of the Anastenarides, the very quality by which it is able to transform one complex of emotions into its opposite, can perhaps be more clearly understood if we examine the meaning of dance and its metaphoric extensions in the daily life of the Kostilides and in the wider context of Greek culture as a whole.

Throughout rural Greece dancing plays an important part in the celebrations which accompany joyful occasions such as baptisms, weddings, and village *paniyiria*. Several women of Ayia Eleni told me how eagerly they look forward to the relatively

infrequent occasions when they have the opportunity to dance. They described the feelings of excitement and enthusiasm which dance music arouses in them, as well as the satisfaction and pleasure which they derive from dancing. They also emphasized the cathartic outburst or release of tension (*ξέσπασμα*) which they experience on such occasions.³⁶

In contrast to these somewhat obvious associations of dance with feelings of joy and happiness as well as with the cathartic release of emotion, images of dance and dancing are used by the Kostilides to express conditions characterized by nervous tension, suffering, punishment, and unpleasant but obligatory activity. For example it is said that a man who is high-strung and irritable is 'dancing because of his nerves' (*χορεύει ἀπ' τὰ νεῦρα του*). Similarly, the shaking and trembling that may occur during periods of intense stress or anxiety are often referred to as 'dancing'. A woman who argued frequently with her mother-in-law said, 'After really bitter arguments with my mother-in-law, I would go and lie down; but my body would be shaking and trembling like a fish. It was as if my body were dancing' (*σὰν νὰ χόρευε τὸ σῶμα μου*). Here images of dancing are used to describe the continuous stream of quick, repetitive activity characteristic of someone experiencing a high degree of nervous tension.

When a young child is slapped or struck by one of his parents as a form of discipline, he 'dances', that is, he jumps about, twisting and turning, trying to escape from his parent's grasp. This 'dance' is usually referred to as 'the dance of the beating' (*ὁ χορὸς τοῦ ξύλου*). The child's 'dance' is a response to the punishment of his parent, just as the early portion of the dance of the Anastenarides, interpreted as suffering, is a response to the punishment of St. Constantine.

The verb *χορεύω* ('to dance'), when used transitively, may mean 'to control' or 'to manipulate'. For example, when a strong-willed wife dominates her weak and ineffectual husband, it is said that 'she dances him any way she pleases' (*τὸν χορεύει*

36. In N. Kazantzakis, *Βίος καὶ πολιτεία τοῦ Ἀλέξη Ζορμπᾶ* (Athens, 1954), pp. 102–3, Alexis Zorbas explicitly refers to dance as a way for a person νὰ ξεσκάσει (literally 'to burst out', and more generally 'to clear one's mind'). He says that he danced after the death of his young son, adding that if he had not danced at that moment he would have gone mad from grief.

δπως θέλει ἐκείνη), that is, 'she has him at her beck and call'. In the same way, St. Constantine, who orders the Anastenarides to dance, has complete control over them.

The performance of an unpleasant but obligatory activity is also referred to as 'dancing'. The proverb 'if you join the dance, you will dance' (ἄμα μπεῖς στὸ χορό, θὰ χορέψεις) implies that if you become involved with a certain group, then you must carry out the activity in which that group is engaged. This proverb not only suggests that dancing is an activity which one must be forced to perform, but also illustrates the use of the image of a dance to define a group of people who are collectively separated from others by virtue of their performance of a certain activity.³⁷

The phrase 'I did it, and I danced' (τὸ 'κανα καὶ χόρεψα) is used by Kostilides to mean 'I did it, and I paid the penalty', or 'I did it, and I suffered the consequences'. It refers to something the speaker did that he should not have done. Consider the case of a woman who for many years had served a ritual meal to the Anastenarides in her house during the *paniyiri* of SS. Constantine and Helen. One year she decided to stop serving this meal. A short time later her son became severely ill. After many time-consuming, costly, and futile trips to physicians in nearby cities, the old woman finally invited the Anastenarides to her house in the hope that they might be of help. The *archianastenaris* told her that her son would not regain his health until she resumed serving the meal. After she agreed to do so, her son did in fact regain his health. Referring to her decision to stop serving the meal, the woman said, 'I did it, and I danced'.

These examples suggest the ambivalent nature of the dance of the Anastenarides. Each time an Anastenaris is possessed, a dance expressive of anxiety and suffering is transformed into a dance expressive of joy and access to supernatural power. This transformation is brought about by the structuring process that the dance of the Anastenarides imposes on the outbursts of intense emotion and motor discharge which are evoked as the Anastenaris enters trance. During each dance, wild, clumsy, and often violent behaviour is structured according to the rhythmic and kinesic rules and patterns of the dance of the Anastenarides and is transformed into a graceful dance of power and beauty.

37. Thus people who are not Anastenarides are referred to as 'outside the dance' (ἐξω ἀπ' τὸ χορό).

This transformation, which reaches its climax when the Anastenaris takes the icon or *simadi* of SS. Constantine and Helen in his hands, is structurally parallel to the transformation from a state of illness to a state of health which takes place over the course of the career of the Anastenaris and which reaches its climax when he 'comes out', dances, and is cured. Both these transformations are brought about through dance. It is in this sense that the dance of the possessed Anastenarides is an essential feature of the ritual therapy of the Anastenaria.

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The Greek Communist Party (KKE)
and the Greek-Italian War, 1940-1:
an Analysis of Zahariadis'
Three Letters

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An analysis of the position of the Greek Communist Party (KKE)¹ during the Greek-Italian war is interesting not only because it involves a hitherto unsolved puzzle – how and why the KKE's General Secretary, Nikos Zahariadis, wrote his 'three letters' – but also because, it involves background factors that help explain how the KKE emerged, during the occupation period, in possession of an invaluable useful 'patriotic' image. Such an image, obtained from Zahariadis' 'first' letter, undeniably facilitated the party's successful efforts to build up

1. The KKE (*Kommounistiko Komma tis Elladas*) was created in November 1918 under the initials SEKE (Socialist Working Party of Greece). In April 1920, SEKE, after its 'left' faction had predominated over the 'right' faction, joined the Communist International under the name SEKE (K) (K, for 'Communist') and in 1924 it took the name KKE. During the years 1920-30 the party, torn apart by internal divisions, appeared unable to expand; the greatest membership it reached was about 2,500. During the party's worst crisis – the so-called 'factionalist struggle without principles', in 1930 – the membership dropped to 1,500. One year later, the Comintern intervened in the KKE's internal affairs, imposing as a new leader the Moscow-trained Zahariadis, then twenty-nine years old. Zahariadis quickly succeeded in unifying and reorganizing the party, whose membership rose steadily: from 6,000 in 1934 to 14,000 in 1936 (i.e. just before the Metaxas dictatorship). It was under Zahariadis that the KKE's Fourth Plenum (1934) dropped the slogan 'autonomy of Macedonia' (see footnote 3, below), something which undoubtedly contributed to its gaining 5.7 per cent of the vote in the 1936

the country's largest liberation movement (EAM)² and, through this movement, to come close to capturing power during the years 1943–4.

Having accepted during the years 1924–34 the Comintern's position calling for the unification of all three parts of Macedonia (Greek, Yugoslav, Bulgarian) into a single autonomous state within the context of a Balkan federation,³ the KKE had been actually acquiescing in a dismemberment of Greek territory, something which was bound to cause it serious political harm. Hence, if the KKE was to succeed in developing a resistance movement during the occupation – that is, by organizing its struggle in a nationalistic-patriotic fashion and by attempting to attract under its banner all Greeks willing to fight the Germans – it desperately needed, among other things, to shake off the 'un-patriotic' image of the period 1924–34. That is why Zahariadis' first letter (October 1940), in which he urged the Greek communists to fight against the invading Italians, proved extremely useful to the KKE: it provided the party with the 'patriotic' credentials it needed.

Interestingly enough, the position Zahariadis adopted in October 1940 openly conflicted with the new Comintern line of September 1939, and constituted one of the few 'nationalistic deviations' among the European communist parties of the time.

elections. For a study of the 1918–40 period see the sole scholarly history of the KKE – a very right wing one, though – by D. G. Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat. The Story of the Greek Communist Party* (London, 1965); an 'unorthodox' communist interpretation by D. Nefeloudis, *Stis Piges tis Kakodemonias, 1918–68* (Athens, 1974); an 'orthodox' brief history of the KKE by H. Ioannidis, 'To KKE, Psyhi tou Ellinikou Ergatikou Kinimatos', *Neos Kosmos*, No. 1 (January 1971). For KKE views on the party's relations with the Comintern see V. Tsikoulas, 'O Georgi Dimitrov ke to KKE sta Deka Prota Hronia tis Yparxis tou', *Neos Kosmos*, No. 8 (June 1972), and D. Sarlis, 'Ena Istoriko Documento Me Epikera Didagmata', *Neos Kosmos*, No. 11 (November 1971). For a collection of KKE documents see *Episima Kimena 1918–1940*, 4 vols. (Athens, 1974).

2. The *Ethniko Apeleftherotiko Metopo* (National Liberation Front) was formed in September 1941, being a coalition of communists and small socialist groups, with the KKE in control.

3. The KKE replaced its slogan 'autonomy for Macedonia' with 'equality of rights for all national minorities living in Greece', in its Third Plenum resolution, in April 1935. See 'I Triti Olomelia tis K. E. tou KKE', *Episima Kimena*, 1934–40, IV, p. 157. Hereafter cited as *KKE documents*, 1934–40.

But how did the KKE, a party which had repeatedly proved its loyalty to Moscow, adopt such a policy? And did this incident involve an attempt by the KKE to become more independent *vis-à-vis* the Comintern?

Until recently we have had no satisfactory explanation of why Zahariadis wrote his first 'nationalistic' letter, which was to be followed by two letters bringing the KKE gradually back into line with Comintern policies. The present article attempts to provide such an explanation, examining in turn: (a) the Metaxas dictatorship's struggle against the KKE (1936–40); (b) the Comintern directive of July 1939 to the KKE, and the new Comintern policy of September 1939; and (c) Zahariadis' three letters (October 1940, November 1940, January 1941). On the basis of evidence presented in this examination, I shall offer an interpretation of why Zahariadis wrote his three letters – and particularly the first one.

I *The KKE and the Metaxas dictatorship*

On 4 August 1936, a *coup d'état* took place as King George II signed two decrees, one suspending the articles of the constitution that guaranteed political liberties and the other dissolving parliament. With the king's blessing and support General Metaxas established his authoritarian regime and asserted that he had saved Greece from 'chaos and communism'. The riots of May 1936 in Salonika, the failure of the two largest political groupings (the Populists and the Liberals) to form a coalition government, and, finally, the general strike that was scheduled for 5 August form the core of the argument which the Metaxist regime used in its effort to substantiate its claims of 'chaos' and 'Communist threat'.⁴ It is hard to believe, though, that the Greek Communist Party (KKE), which had obtained only 5.76 per cent of the votes in the 1936 elections, was in a strong position to challenge the existing system, let alone overthrow it. It should be noted, also, that the army, after the unsuccessful 1935 Plastiras coup, had been purged of its republican officers and was therefore under solid royalist control. This explains not only the ease with which the

4. D. G. Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat*, pp. 118–25, attempts to justify the dictatorship along these lines, his relevant chapter having the characteristic title: 'The Alternatives: Dictatorship or Revolution'.

dictatorship was established but also its almost unchallenged survival until the German invasion in 1941.⁵ Finally, it should be mentioned that the political deadlock had been broken one day before the coup, when Sophoulis (the Liberal's leader), and Theotokis (the leader of a right-wing faction) visited the king and told him that they had agreed to form a coalition government. But the king did not seem interested in their proposal; thus the two politicians concluded that he had 'other plans', little knowing what these plans in fact were.

During the night of 4 August most leading KKE members escaped arrest. But the Metaxas authorities, whose agents had infiltrated the KKE's underground organization before the coup, very quickly achieved some spectacular results. Owing to such an agent, Zahariadis was arrested in September, and two months later Mytilas (a member of the Central Committee in whose house the KKE archives were found) suffered the same fate. Information included in these archives led to a large number of additional arrests.⁶ By April 1938, all members of the Politbureau had been arrested, with the exception of Siantos, who formed a new Politbureau by including in it the members of the Central Committee – Ploumbidis, Skafidas, Papayiannis. By November 1939, only Papayiannis remained at liberty, and he, without waiting for the approval of Zahariadis, temporarily took over the KKE leadership (while still recognizing Zahariadis as the official leader) by forming a Central Committee which was later to be labelled the 'Old Central Committee' (OCC). In fact, the leader of the OCC group was Ploumbidis who, even though interned in a sanatorium, kept in touch with the organization and directed it.⁷

Early in 1940, Maniadakis, the shrewd Minister of Public

5. The fact that the army was under right-wing control makes it imperative for those writers who attempt to justify the Metaxas dictatorship to talk about communist infiltration in the army. Such an effort is made by Haralambidis and Hadjiathanasiou in 'To Mystikon Arhion' (The Secret Archive), a series of articles in the daily newspaper *Ethnikos Kiryx*, 9 October 1949ff. The archives in question were those of Maniadakis, the Minister of Public Order during the Metaxas regime. But the only thing these articles succeed in demonstrating is precisely how negligible KKE infiltration in the army in fact was.

6. 'Mystikon Arhion', loc. cit., 9–10 October 1949.

7. *KKE, Episima Kimena 1940–5*, V, ed. KKE Esoterikou (1973), p. 24. Hereafter cited as *KKE Documents, 1940–5*.

Security who led the anti-KKE campaign, sensing that the arrests of all prominent KKE members had created a vacuum in the leadership of the party – a fact which explained the creation of the OCC – decided to bring into existence his 'own' Communist Party. Such an organization could only come into existence if Maniadakis had at his disposal high ranking KKE members willing to collaborate with the police. In June 1939, Tyrimos, a member of the Politbureau and editor in chief of *Rizospastis*, the KKE daily, signed a 'repentance declaration' disowning his ideology, and actively collaborated with the police in the creation of such a pseudo-communist organization.⁸ A few months later, Yannis Mihailidis, a member of the Politbureau, also signed a 'repentance declaration', and was freed from Corfu prison camp. Unlike Tyrimos, though, Mihailidis had signed such a declaration on the orders of Zahariadis, who had instructed him to investigate an accusation that there was a traitor among the KKE leaders and to reorganize the party on a new basis.⁹ But Mihailidis, quickly arrested, confessed all about his mission and decided to collaborate with the police.¹⁰ Maniadakis did not miss his chance; he used Mihailidis (who, unlike Tyrimos, was not suspected by the interned KKE leaders of collaborating with the

8. 'Mystikon Arhion', loc. cit., 11–13 October 1949. According to one of the authors of this study, Haralambidis, who was an officer in the Maniadakis' police, Tyrimos told him that he had decided to struggle against the KKE only when he found out that his younger brother, who was studying in Moscow, had been executed as a Trotskyist.

9. Partsalidis interview. Dimitris (Mitsos) Partsalidis, whom I interviewed on 7 January 1975, is probably the most eminent KKE personality still alive. In various periods of the KKE history he has occupied the following posts: Member of the Central Committee of the KKE, member of the Politbureau, representative of the KKE in EAM, Secretary of the Central Committee of EAM, Prime Minister of the 'Provisional Democratic Government' formed by the KKE 'somewhere in the mountains' during the 1946–9 civil war. A moderate and broadminded communist, he clashed in 1950 with the then all-powerful Zahariadis. When Zahariadis, due to Soviet pressure, was toppled in 1956, Partsalidis was expected to take his place but the Soviets thought differently. Partsalidis later clashed with the new KKE leadership, and was one of the founders of the 'liberal' splinter Greek Communist Party, the 'KKE Esoterikou'.

10. Mihailidis' role is unclear. It has been asserted that despite his collaboration with Maniadakis he remained a communist at heart and tried to warn KKE members of the PA's role. See *KKE Documents, 1940–5*, p. 34.

police) as the figurehead leader of a police-created Communist Party, which was to be labelled 'the Provisional Administration of the KKE' (PA).

So, at the beginning of 1940, the interned KKE leadership was thrown into total confusion as two communist parties came into existence, each publishing an underground *Rizospastis*, each professing loyalty to Zahariadis, each accusing the other of being a police-created organization. Many rank and file communists who had avoided arrest refused to cooperate with either of these two organizations, and tried to get in touch with the imprisoned KKE leaders. This situation made certain prison camps, and particularly the one of Akronafplia, in which 630 communists were held, very important centres from which information and advice were given to non-arrested KKE members who were seeking guidance. Zahariadis, who had been interned in Corfu prison camp with the most prominent KKE leaders, and the Akronafplia communists (to a lesser extent, though) expressed more trust in the police-created PA than in the OCC. Such an error was due to the fact that the PA was headed by Mihailidis, Zahariadis' trusted man, while the OCC had come into existence without Zahariadis' prior approval. The policies of the OCC were considered 'treacherous' as late as December 1942, but eventually its leaders were redeemed.¹¹ Conversely, the PA was condemned by Zahariadis in January 1941 – that is, not until a whole year after its founding.

We must say a further word about Maniadakis' 'repentance declarations'. Under extensive psychological and/or physical pressure, KKE members were induced to sign statements in which they disowned their ideology.¹² These 'repentance declarations' were then published in the censored press. Maniadakis, who had a deep respect for Zahariadis' leadership qualities and organizational abilities, believed that the KKE

11. 'The 2nd Panhellenic Conference of the KKE', December 1942, *KKE Documents 1940-5*, p. 113.

12. According to Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat*, p. 130, Maniadakis' 'repentance declaration' tactics, which aimed at 'breaking' an individual, were 'seemingly mild'. It is interesting to note that in one of the confidential Maniadakis' orders to the police, it is revealed that a communist when confronted with the dilemma of signing such a declaration chose to commit suicide by jumping from the window of the police station. See 'Mystikon Arhion', loc. cit., 28 December 1949.

would not disintegrate simply because most of its leaders were arrested. Maniadakis' aim was 'to deliver a blow against the organizational structure and monolithic structure of the KKE', and he used the declarations as his main weapon. 'Our party is monolithic in its ideas and does not permit such tactics as the signing of declarations because if we legitimize such declarations they can tear us apart': this was the reaction of the underground *Rizospastis* to Maniadakis' measures.¹³ The KKE suffered seriously from the publication of such declarations since: (a) it lost many members who by signing declarations were automatically considered as traitors by the KKE; (b) the party's morale was gradually shattered and this led to more declarations; (c) some communists who signed declarations, knowing that after such an action they were nothing more than traitors to the party, felt they were left with no other option but to become active police collaborators.

The creation of the PA, the tactic of repentance declarations, the fact that the KKE discovered in its ranks a large number of 'traitors' and spies – all these factors, even though they did not lead to the KKE's total disintegration, nevertheless succeeded in creating a phobia within the party, as KKE members saw 'spies' and 'traitors' everywhere. This phobia paralysed the KKE and forced it into a desperate, defensive position throughout the dictatorship.

II *The Comintern Directive of July 1939; the New Comintern Line of September 1939; the 'Old Central Committee's' stand*

In February 1939, the Fifth Plenum of the KKE under the chairmanship of G. Siantos declared: 'Our party struggles to secure the independence and integrity of the nation, but at the same time it states that the greatest enemy of our country's independence and integrity is ... the monarchofascist dictatorship.' The Fifth Plenum went on to condemn the then signed Agreement between the Balkan Alliance and Bulgaria for 'opening the doors for Bulgaria's entrance into Western Thrace and Serbia's entrance into Salonika'.¹⁴ In July 1939 the

13. Quoted in 'Mystikon Arhion', 28 December 1949. See also 27 December.

14. 'The 5th Plenum of the Central Committee of the KKE', *KKE Documents 1934-40*, p. 463. The agreement in question was signed by General Metaxas in

Comintern's Political Secretariat sent a directive to the KKE which was in accordance with its policies of that period, urging all Communist Parties to support governments of their countries willing to preserve 'national independence' and oppose 'fascist aggression'.

Your country is threatened by the fascist Axis and particularly by Italian fascism. . . . The first duty of the KKE is the defence of the country's independence. Since the Metaxas government also fight against the same danger there is no reason to pursue his overthrow as your first aim. Of course, you should struggle for more internal freedom for the Greek people because this strengthens the defensive capabilities of your country.

The directive went on to praise the Greek-Bulgarian agreement as 'a step towards the peaceful settlement of inter-Balkan differences', and urged the KKE to support the creation of a 'strong alliance of all Balkan countries'.¹⁵

In August 1939, the Soviet-German treaty was signed. At first, the French and British Communist parties, while praising the treaty, seemed eager to support the governments of their own countries against Axis aggression. The French Communist Party, for example, voted in support of war credits and general mobilization and stated that it would 'do nothing to hamper the unity so indispensable for the defence of the country'. A similar

his capacity as acting president of the Balkan Alliance (Greece, Turkey, Yugoslavia and Romania) and the Bulgarian Foreign Secretary Giorgi Kiosseivanoff on 31 July 1938. It was agreed that Bulgaria should be allowed to rearm and fortify its borders and that the Balkan Alliance would not insist on the implementation of relevant clauses of the Neuilly and Lausanne treaties. Furthermore, the Agreement stated that all signatories should desist from using violence 'in their mutual relations, in conformity to the agreements each of these states had signed on the issue of non-aggression'. For the full text of the Agreement see *Efimeris tis Kyverniseos*, 12 November 1938, No. 429, pp. 2823-4.

15. Quoted in M. Kaila, 'To KKE ke i Kommounistiki Diethnis' (The KKE and the Comintern), *Neos Kosmos*, No. 11 (November 1973), p. 27. Siantos revealed the directive's existence in 1942 during his speech to the Panhellenic Conference.

stand was adopted by the British Communist Party.¹⁶ By the end of September, however, a new line started to emerge. *World News And Views*, in an article entitled 'Must the War Go On?', declared that an 'end' should be put 'to the imperialistic war'.¹⁷ According to the Comintern, as Dimitrov wrote, the division between 'aggressor and non-aggressor powers' now did not 'correspond to the real situation'. He went further to claim, 'what is more, it is the British and French imperialists who now come forward as the most zealous supporters of the continuation and further incitement of war'.¹⁸ By 1940, the communist campaign against the Allies became more explicit, and in April, *World News And Views* labelled the English and French as the 'warmongers'.¹⁹ The French Communist Party now admitted that it had made an error by voting in support of war credits, and when France had been invaded, it declared that its primary aim was to overthrow the 'government of 200 families which dragged our country into the present adventure'. After the armistice, it was to state that the defeat of French imperialism was a victory for the working class. The British Communist Party urged the overthrow of Churchill and asked: 'Is it not clear that Hitler and the ruling class of Germany would be unable to persuade their workers to carry on the war against a British Government which no longer held any menace for them?'²⁰ Finally the Yugoslav Communist Party accused certain party members of not understanding the character of the imperialistic war and blamed them for adopting the slogan 'if we are attacked, we should defend ourselves'.²¹

The Old Central Committee, contrary to the position Zahariadis adopted in his October 1940 letter, closely followed the September 1939 Comintern line. On 7 December 1940, it declared that 'the war which was caused by the Royalist-

16. *The Communist International 1919-1943 Documents*. Selected and edited by Degras, III, 1929-43 (London, 1965), pp. 439-40 (hereafter cited as *The Communist International 1929-43*).

17. *Ibid.*, p. 441.

18. Extracts from an Article by Dimitrov on the 'Tasks of the Working Class in the War' (November 1939), *ibid.*, pp. 450-1.

19. 'May Day Manifesto of the ECCI' (April 1940), *ibid.*, pp. 465-6.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 443 and pp. 463-4.

21. Quoted in B. Lazitsch, *Tito, et la révolution Yougoslave 1937-1956* (Paris, 1957), p. 42.

Metaxist gang and was ordered by the English imperialists cannot bear any relation whatsoever to the defence of our country. . . . Neither is it a war against fascism. . . .²² On 18 March 1941, it made a similar statement.²³ Zahariadis' October 'patriotic' letter – which was, of course, immediately 'adopted' by the PA – was declared a 'forgery' by the OCC in December, and treated as one more of Maniadakis' tricks. In March 1941, in an article published in the OCC *Rizospastis*, Ploumbidis argued that Zahariadis' letter had been forged since Zahariadis would never address his letter to Maniadakis but only 'to the people', and, more importantly, since Zahariadis would have never signed his letter as 'Secretary of the Central Committee' (a title which belonged to V. Nefeloudis) but only as 'General Secretary, leader of the KKE'.²⁴ With these arguments as a basis, D. G. Kousoulas has asserted that Zahariadis deliberately made these 'errors' so that he could later disown the October letter if such an action suited his purposes.²⁵ Such a far-fetched thesis cannot stand because: (a) even though Zahariadis did, in fact, send his letter to Maniadakis for publication, he headed it: 'To the People of Greece' (*Pros to Lao tis Elladas*); (b) though Zahariadis signed his letter as 'Secretary of the Central Committee', he signed the same way in his second letter, in which he adopted a different stand. In his third letter as well, he did not use his 'General Secretary' title but signed simply as 'N. Zahariadis'. Finally, when interrogated by the Gestapo in Vienna (June 1941), he signed his defiant statement as 'Secretary of the Central Committee of the KKE and Member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International', and not as 'General Secretary'.²⁶ It seems clear, on the one hand, that Zahariadis was simply casual when using his title, and on the other, that the OCC, seeing Maniadakis' conspiracies

22. 'Manifesto of the Central Committee of KKE', *KKE Documents 1940-45*, p. 26.

23. See 'Decision of the Central Committee of the KKE', *ibid.*, p. 37.

24. In Th. Papakonstantinou, *Anatomia tis Epanastaseos* (Anatomy of the Revolution) (Athens, 1952), pp. 146-7. Also Kousoulas, *Revolution and Defeat*, p. 141.

25. Kousoulas, *op. cit.*, p. 141. Kousoulas, who has an excellent chapter on Maniadakis' anti-KKE tactics, has a very confusing and poor analysis of Zahariadis' position during the Greek-Italian war.

26. *KKE Documents 1940-45*, pp. 16, 23, 35 and 57.

everywhere, attached too much importance to certain trivial details. There is little doubt that had the OCC believed in the authenticity of Zahariadis' October letter it would have followed his line, rather than that of the Comintern.

III Zahariadis' 'first' (October 1940) letter

On 28 October 1940, Metaxas rejected the Italian ultimatum and the Italian invasion began. On 31 October, Zahariadis gave to Maniadakis his 'open' letter, which was promptly published in the censored press:

Today all Greeks are fighting for freedom, honour and national independence. . . . The people of Greece are conducting today a war of national liberation against Mussolini's fascism. . . . To this war, which is directed by the Metaxas government, all of us should dedicate all our efforts without any reservation. . . . The prize that will crown the working people's efforts should and will be a new Greece of work and freedom, a Greece saved from every imperialistic dependence, with a civilization truly of all the people.²⁷

Zahariadis' position was acclaimed by the Akronafplia group, headed by Ioannidis and Theos, in two letters they sent to the Metaxas government on 6 October and 13 November.²⁸

Zahariadis' October appeal to the 'people of Greece' was in direct contradiction to the Comintern line of that period. Both Zahariadis and the Akronafplia group were in fact supporting the unity of 'all' Greeks, at a time when the Comintern scorned those who 'wave the flag of national unity'. They were siding with Metaxas to fight for 'freedom, honour and independence' at a time when the Comintern warned that the 'proletariat . . . have nothing to defend in this war . . . , the war of their exploiters'.²⁹

In trying to explain Zahariadis' attitude it is of vital importance to examine whether the KKE leader, who had been

27. 'Open Letter to the People of Greece', *KKE Documents 1940-45*, p. 16.

28. *KKE Documents 1940-45*, pp. 17-18 and 19-21. It seems that the Akronafplia group had already adopted a 'patriotic' position prior to Zahariadis' letter (pp. 14-15).

29. *The Communist International 1929-1943*, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

in prison since 1936, knew about (a) the July 1939 Comintern directive, or (b) the new September 1939 Comintern line. According to what Partsalidis told me (Partsalidis was in Corfu prison with Zahariadis), the KKE leader did not know of the directive's existence, since the Corfu prisoners found out about the directive only when Siantos (who had received the directive) was moved to Corfu and since, by that time, Zahariadis had been transferred to another prison in Athens. P. Nefeloudis, who was also in Corfu, confirms Partsalidis' view.³⁰ On the other hand, Zahariadis, according to Partsalidis again, not only knew about the September 1939 Comintern line, but had also accepted it as ideologically correct, and had defended it in his discussions with communist fellow prisoners who expressed different views. Partsalidis' information is again confirmed by what P. Nefeloudis writes.³¹ How was it then that Zahariadis, who had accepted in Corfu the correctness of the Comintern line, drastically changed his mind in Athens and wrote the October letter?

The only plausible explanation seems to be that, during his stay in Athens, Zahariadis came to know of the existence of the Comintern directive, *which in fact advised the KKE to do precisely what Zahariadis did in October 1940* – that is, support Metaxas against the Italian invaders. According to P. Nefeloudis, Maniatakis arranged a meeting between his PA agents and Zahariadis, during which they informed Zahariadis of the directive's existence. This was why, Nefeloudis asserts, Zahariadis was transferred from Corfu to Athens.³² It is interesting to note, however, that Maniatakis, when interviewed by D. G. Kousoulas, did not reveal the existence of such a plot, even though he had every reason to do so if it had existed. Maniatakis also told Kousoulas that Zahariadis had been moved from Corfu to Athens simply because Metaxas did not want the KKE leader to fall into Italian hands in case of a Greek-Italian war.³³ Nevertheless, whether or not Maniatakis orchestrated such a plot does not challenge the view that in Athens Zahariadis somehow discovered the directive's

30. Nefeloudis, *Stis Piges tis Kakodemonias*, 1918–68, p. 140.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

32. *Ibid.*, pp. 141–2.

33. Kousoulas, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

existence, since this is the only way that one can explain in a satisfactory manner Zahariadis' spectacular change of viewpoint after he had left Corfu. It is very possible that Zahariadis was briefed on the directive by Mihailidis, the PA figurehead leader, with whom Zahariadis, as Partsalidis told me,³⁴ had a meeting in his Athens prison. There is little doubt that such a meeting was organized by Maniatakis. Assuming that it was Mihailidis who told Zahariadis about the directive, it is impossible and in any case unimportant to determine whether Mihailidis gave such information on his own initiative or on Maniatakis' instructions.

In sum, the first and most important factor that influenced Zahariadis to write his October letter was the Comintern directive, the existence of which he discovered in Athens. It is important to remember, however, that the directive's July 1939 advice was outdated, since it had been replaced by the Comintern's new line of September 1939, a fact that Zahariadis could not have failed to know. Therefore, by deciding to follow the outdated directive's advice, rather than the current Comintern line, Zahariadis, in opposition to the OCC, was taking a bold initiative. Most communist parties, when the September 1939 Comintern stand was put forward, found themselves in the unhappy position of following a policy which was bound to cause them considerable political damage since it offended the 'patriotic-nationalistic' feelings which existed in their countries. It is not surprising, therefore, that many communist parties, despite their loyalty to the Comintern, looked for a secure way out of this unfortunate situation: for a sign that might indicate that this disastrous Comintern line had been changed, at least in relation to their particular cases. The Yugoslav Communist Party, for example, which had faithfully followed the September 1939 Comintern line, jumped at the first opportunity, i.e. the conclusion of a non-aggression pact between Yugoslavia and the USSR on the eve of the German invasion of Yugoslavia, to interpret such a pact as a change of the Comintern line in relation to Yugoslavia. This was why, as the German invasion took place, the YCP suddenly adopted a

34. All the above thoughts and conclusions – even though based to a great extent on Partsalidis' information – are my own, and are not necessarily shared by Partsalidis.

'patriotic' stand towards the German-Yugoslav war.³⁵ In this context one should view Zahariadis' decision to use the outdated Comintern directive as a convenient way out of implementing the September 1939 Comintern line. Zahariadis was facilitated in taking his October decision by the fact that the directive – contrary to the general advice to all communist parties contained in the September 1939 Comintern line – gave *specific advice to the KKE* to adjust its stand towards Metaxas in relation to Italian aggression.

A second factor that influenced Zahariadis' October decision, though clearly one of lesser importance, seems to have been his hope that the KKE might gain certain concessions from Metaxas in return for its October position. Even though Zahariadis' support was actually 'unconditional', he did propose to the Metaxas government certain measures the KKE would have liked to see implemented. Partsalidis, who gave me this information, did not specify what Zahariadis' proposals were. It is very possible that Zahariadis was hoping that Metaxas would at least free the approximately 2,000 interned communists. Such a hope was overtly expressed in the Akronafplia letters and hinted at in Zahariadis' October letter when he declared that 'all Greeks should fight the Italians'. How could the KKE members join the common struggle if they were kept in gaol? Zahariadis also seemed to hope that, under the pressure generated by the Italian invasion (a clear-cut victory for the Greek army was then unexpected), the Metaxas government might swing to what the KKE considered a neutralist policy, and appeal to the USSR for support. If such an appeal were made, there is no doubt that the KKE's position would be immediately strengthened. The existence of such a hope was hinted at when Zahariadis wrote in his October letter that the 'new Greece should and will' be 'saved from every imperialistic dependence'. Later, in January 1941, in his third letter, Zahariadis said that his aim, when writing the October 1940 letter, had been, among other things: '... (3) To restore popular liberties in Greece, a popular anti-plutocratic policy. (4) To make the war national, antifascist, anti-imperialistic. ... This we could only achieve with a total orientation towards the Soviet Union. ...'³⁶ It seems clear that,

35. Lazitsch, op. cit., p. 52.

36. 'The 3rd Open Letter of N. Zahariadis', *KKE Documents 1940-45*, p. 32.

when writing his October letter, Zahariadis was hoping that Metaxas would make certain alterations in his internal and foreign policy from which the KKE would benefit.

Finally, the fact that it was the Italians who had attacked Greece rather than the Germans – with whom the USSR had concluded the non-aggression pact – probably also played a minor part in facilitating Zahariadis' decision.

IV Zahariadis' second (November 1940) and third (January 1941) letters

In writing his first letter, Zahariadis had undoubtedly made, as Partsalidis termed it, a daring and risky decision (*tolmiri apofasi*). It seems that Zahariadis, who felt uncertain whether he had followed a correct policy in October, worried about the possible reactions of the Comintern to his 'daring' decision. Under these circumstances it is plausible to assume that Zahariadis became increasingly eager to obtain certain concrete concessions from Metaxas which would justify his October stand in the Comintern's eyes. Such concessions would include, as mentioned previously, the release of imprisoned KKE members, and more importantly, the pursuit of a pro-Soviet foreign policy by Metaxas. By November 1940 it became clear that Metaxas, who was indeed trying hard to follow a truly neutralist foreign policy and had been reluctant all along to admit British troops to Greece because he feared a German invasion,³⁷ had no intention of taking the measures Zahariadis hoped for. Owing to the fact that the Greek army had repelled the Italian invasion and had successfully counter-attacked the Italians in Albania, Metaxas felt no need to make concessions in any direction. Therefore, Zahariadis, by using the excuse that the war was taking place in Albanian territory, decided to alter his October stand. The new position he adopted, in his second letter of 26 November 1940, was something between those of his first letter (and the July directive) and the Comintern line of September 1939. The Italians were still considered the main enemy, but the war between England and Italy-Germany was for the first time

37. In January 1941 Metaxas declined A. Wavell's offer of men and material. For details see: 'Gen. Sir Archibald P. Wavell, Commander-in-Chief in the Middle East', from 7 February 1941 to 15 July 1941, Supplement to the *London Gazette*, No. 37638, 3 July 1946, pp. 3, 423-44.

branded as 'imperialistic': 'Greece has no place in the imperialistic war between England and Italy-Germany. Since our people are effectively defending their independence and their national liberty, today they only want one thing, freedom and neutrality.' He finally warned Metaxas that the KKE would not support the continuation of an imperialistic war.³⁸ Zahariadis smuggled his letter out of gaol and sent it to the PA, which at that time he still trusted. He instructed the PA to publish it in the underground *Rizospastis* and to make sure that all communists were informed of its existence.

The precarious balance that Zahariadis' second letter tried to achieve, between the advice of the directive and the September 1939 Comintern line, was quickly shattered. As the PA did not publish Zahariadis' second letter, the KKE leader – who somehow was kept well informed – finally concluded that the PA had been a Maniadakis tool all along. There is little doubt that this discovery was the main factor influencing Zahariadis' decision to write his third letter of 15 January 1941, addressed to the Communist Youth Organization, in which he fully adopted the September 1939 Comintern line. According to the third letter, the war Greece was fighting was an imperialistic war, and the KKE's main enemy was Metaxas, not the Italians. Zahariadis was undoubtedly alarmed by the fact that the police-created PA had been using his October letter to urge the communists to support Metaxas. This meant that he was in danger of being accused by the Comintern of adopting, with his first letter, a line that suited the interests of pseudo-communists and police agents. Zahariadis' perception of such a danger is clearly expressed in his third letter, in which he adopted a defensive position towards his first letter, as he found it necessary to state that for his October letter he took 'full responsibility *vis-à-vis* the KKE and the Communist International'. He also found it necessary to imply that his first letter had not in fact been 'social-patriotic'. He did this by attacking the PA for transforming his first letter 'into a clearly social-patriotic document', and, hence, for trying 'to stain the honour of the KKE'. Finally, for the first time, he also found it necessary to leave no doubt about his loyalty to the Comintern by using at the beginning and end of his letter the slogan 'Hail the Communist International'.³⁹

38. 'Open Letter', *KKE Documents 1940-45*, pp. 22-3.

39. 'The 3rd Open Letter of N. Zahariadis', *ibid.*, pp. 31-5.

Zahariadis' three letters can now be schematically presented:

Comintern Dir., July 1939

ZAHARIADIS' 1st LETTER

31 October 1940

(a) Main enemy: Italians

(b) War: National-

Liberation

ZAHARIADIS' 2nd LETTER

26 November 1940

(a) Main enemy: Italians

(b) War: Imperialistic

Comintern Line, Sept. 1939

ZAHARIADIS' 3rd LETTER

15 January 1941

(a) Main enemy: Metaxas

(b) War: Imperialistic

It is interesting to note that the position Zahariadis finally adopted with his third letter is identical to the one the OCC had been putting forward throughout the war, the only difference being that, owing to his first and second letters, Zahariadis argued that the war Greece was fighting had not been imperialistic from the start, but had eventually assumed such a character.

3RD ZAHARIADIS LETTER

JAN. 1941

After chasing the Italians out of Greece the blood of our soldiers is spilled in vain, and today *English imperialism* collects, in the blood of the Greek children, the interest of the capital it invested in . . . the Monarchofascist dictatorship.

. . . the people and the army should *overthrow* the Monarchofascist dictatorship of Metaxas, who is their principal and main enemy.

This (i.e. neutrality and peace) we could only achieve with a *total orientation* towards the Soviet Union.⁴⁰

OLD CENTRAL COMMITTEE

STAND, DEC. 1940

We are appealing to our warriors to refuse to fight *outside* the borders of our country. What are we doing in Albania? The war was ordered by the belligerent *English plutocrats*.

. . . we should *first of all overthrow* the gang of the King and Metaxas which got us involved in the war.

. . . and ensure our *neutrality towards the continuation of the imperialistic war, by orientating our policy towards the Soviet Union.*⁴¹

40. Quotes from Zahariadis' 3rd letter: pp. 32, 35. Italics my own.

41. Quotes from OCC declaration, pp. 25, 28. Italics my own except where indicated (*). All quotes from *KKE Documents 1940-45*.

Conclusion

The October 1940 letter, which formulated the KKE's first reaction to the Greek-Italian war, and the second and third letters, which followed, were the products not of a party decision but of a purely personal one made by the imprisoned KKE leader Nikos Zahariadis while he was isolated from other Politbureau members. A communist of some international standing (head of the Comintern's Balkan Bureau), Zahariadis exerted total control over the party machine. His prestige within the KKE had immensely grown after he had succeeded, during the period 1931-6, in rebuilding a divided party. His defiant attitude during the Metaxist dictatorship had further strengthened his position in the KKE leadership, and his charismatic personality had assured him of the personal devotion of party members.

As the possibility of war with Italy grew, inter-party discussions were held both inside prisons and outside them in an effort to formulate the KKE's attitudes in case such a war took place. Although conflicting views were voiced by party members, no separate factions were formed; hence one cannot speak of an inter-KKE conflict between 'nationalist' and 'internationalist' groups. Zahariadis' ultimate decision would have been unquestionably endorsed – indeed, would have been more than welcomed – by the confused members of a shattered party. The surviving small party groups were scattered all over Greece, lying low. Their leaders, all being minor KKE officials (since the major KKE leaders had been arrested), had insufficient prestige to make any sort of decision on such an important question. This situation made the KKE depend entirely on an initiative from Zahariadis in case a Greek-Italian war broke out. When the invasion did take place, Zahariadis, with his October letter, gave the party exactly what it desperately needed: a clear political line to follow. After the 1956 inter-KKE anti-Zahariadis campaign, efforts were made to stress 'independent' actions by party groups or leaders in connexion with the KKE's October 1940 policies. The message the new 1956 KKE leadership wanted to put forward was that the KKE would have adopted a 'patriotic' stand irrespective of Zahariadis' attitude. This is sheer nonsense. Had 'the leader' taken a different

stand in 1940 the party would have unquestionably followed suit. Hence, if one aims at explaining and analysing the KKE's October 1940 policy there is little else to do but concentrate primarily on Zahariadis' attitude. Of course, as already noted, the Akronafplia detainees had adopted a 'patriotic' position prior to Zahariadis' first letter (it is as yet unclear what reasons led them to such a decision). This happened obviously because at the time there was no 'Zahariadis line'. Had the KKE leader on 31 October opted for an 'internationalist' stand, the Akronafplia detainees (headed by Politbureau member Ioannidis, whose devotion to Zahariadis was unquestionable) would have undoubtedly followed his lead – as long, of course, as they accepted the authenticity of his message. (The fact that the OCC party members stuck to their own 'internationalist' position in spite of Zahariadis' first letter should be attributed solely to the fact that they believed the KKE leader's open letter to have been forged by the Metaxist authorities.)

Unquestionably, with his first letter, Zahariadis was making a very courageous decision since he was refusing to implement the September 1939 Comintern stand. The Comintern slogans were too general, in the sense that they appealed to the communist parties of so many different countries; too rigid, in the sense that they offered no options; and, most importantly, too closely connected to the Soviet Union's own interests to be of any value to the individual communist parties that were facing specific and complex situations in their own countries. Zahariadis' October policies were of course not based on such criticisms of the Comintern. The KKE leader's decision to write his first letter simply took into account the fact that the KKE could not afford, after the disastrous Macedonian policies it had pursued in the past, to follow another 'unpatriotic' line.

Yet, despite such a correct assumption, and despite the courage of his decision, Zahariadis eventually adopted the Comintern policies. Such a development is not so surprising as it appears at first glance. The main reason for Zahariadis' failure to remain firm regarding his October position is that, despite his 'independent' first letter, the KKE leader *remained a Comintern devotee*. His devotion to the Comintern is openly articulated in a small book he wrote in prison and completed in June 1939, in which he leaves no doubt that the KKE was for him nothing else

but 'the Greek part of the Comintern'.⁴² It is extremely important to notice, first, that Zahariadis' October stand was totally dependent on the existence of another piece of Comintern advice, i.e., the 1939 directive. This becomes obviously clear if one bears in mind that, before finding out about the directive's existence, Zahariadis had accepted, and was ready to implement, the Comintern line of September 1939. Hence, before adopting his October position and deciding not to follow the September 1939 Comintern line, Zahariadis needed an 'alibi', a way out, which could be provided only by the Comintern itself, or, of course, by the USSR. Second, had Zahariadis based his October position primarily on his own independent conclusions, rather than on the existence of the directive, he would not have worried so much about the Comintern's reactions to his first letter. But, since this did not happen, Zahariadis became increasingly alarmed lest he had gone too far by following outdated Comintern advice rather than the current Comintern line. Therefore, since Zahariadis' upholding of his October stand was dependent on Comintern approval, it necessarily became frail. As certain events convinced Zahariadis that he was in danger of being castigated by the Comintern for his October initiative, he fully adopted the September 1939 Comintern line in his third letter, after toying for a while with the middle-of-the-road solution which he had adopted in his second letter.⁴³

Had Zahariadis' second, and particularly his third letter, in which he had urged Greek soldiers to disobey orders and had branded the war the Greeks fought as 'imperialistic', been published in the Greek press, the KKE would have suffered immense political damage from which it would have recovered only with great difficulty during the occupation. But when both these letters fell into the hands of the Metaxist authorities, Maniadakis, considering them 'subversive' in a wartime period, opted for their non-publication. This meant that the vast majority of the Greek population, which knew all about the first

42. Nikos Zahariadis, *Epilogi Kimenon* (Selection of texts) (Athens, n.d.), p. 38.

43. The 'certain events' were, for example: Metaxas' failure to pursue a 'neutralist foreign policy' in the manner the Soviets viewed such a policy; Metaxas' refusal to release KKE detainees thus indicating a softening of his anti-communist attitude, and, finally, Zahariadis' discovery that the PA, which was enthusiastically backing his first letter, was a tool of the police.

letter, discovered the existence of the second and third letters only after the liberation – a fact which enabled the KKE to boast of its 'nationalism-patriotism' throughout the occupation on the basis of Zahariadis' first letter. It is therefore hardly surprising that even P. Nefeloudis has been forced to admit, despite his strong dislike for Zahariadis, that the latter's first letter was extremely important, as it enabled the KKE to gain considerable prestige in the eyes of the Greek people, and laid 'the most solid foundations' for the formation of the resistance movement during the period 1942–4.⁴⁴ M. Partsalidis, in an anti-Zahariadis speech in 1950, together with accusations he launched, also praised Zahariadis' October letter for being the 'basis' on which EAM (i.e. the resistance period's National Liberation Front) was built.⁴⁵

It is interesting to note that the KKE, both during Zahariadis' leadership (until 1955) and after his replacement, adopted two distinctly different attitudes towards Zahariadis' three letters. While the first letter was given the widest possible publicity, the second and third letters were treated as if they had never existed.⁴⁶

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44. P. Nefeloudis, op. cit., p. 139.

45. 'Partsalidis' speech towards the 7th Plenum (1950) of the Central Committee of the KKE, *Neos Kosmos* (August 1950), No. 8, p. 494.

46. For such examples consult: *Rizospastis*, 28 October 1945, p. 1; 'Materials of the 7th Plenum of the KKE (1957)', *Neos Kosmos*, March 1957, pp. 89, 98, 99; and P. Mavromatis, 'O Defteros Pangosmios Polemos ke i Synepies tou gia tin Ellada', *Neos Kosmos*, No. 12 (December 1969). An interesting discussion on the KKE's recent attitude towards Zahariadis' letters is found in S. Karras, 'Politiki Provlitismmi', *Apo tin Istoria ke tin Synhroni Pragmatikotita tou Ellinikou Kommounistikou Kinimatos* (Athens, 1957), pp. 86–7.

Greek Workers in the Intermountain West: The Early Twentieth Century*

HELEN PAPANIKOLAS

The Greeks were among many national and racial groups to inundate the Intermountain West at the turn of the century and in many parts of it were the largest group of workers. Payrolls and newspaper reports, the many self-sufficient 'Greek Towns,' large chapters of Panhellenic Unions, and the early establishment of Greek Orthodox churches give us cause to believe that the 1910 Census represented only a portion of Greek immigrants.¹ The men were constantly moving and census-taking was haphazard.

Besides their numerical superiority in many mines, mills, and railroad gangs, the Greeks had an even sharper distinctiveness than other new immigrants of the same period. They (and the Japanese) were the most nationalistic and among the most family oriented. Revolt, nationalism, and redeeming of lands lost to the Turks were entwined themes of life for them; and the will of the family traversed the thousands of miles separating them from the *patridha* (fatherland). The long epoch of Turkish rule had tightened the extended family unit, the *soi* (clan); to survive under Moslem control and the debilitating poverty of

* A short version of this paper was published in the *Journal of the Hellenic Diaspora*, IV (1977), 4-13. Taped interviews of first generation Greek respondents used in writing the paper are filed in the American West Center, University of Utah. Interviewers: Louis Cononelos and the author.

1. 1910 Census: Utah 4,039 Greeks; Idaho 1,869; Wyoming 1,915; Nevada 1,060; Montana 1,934. 1910 reflected the first significant immigration figures.

the country, the family ruled its members with unyielding control. The first law of life was the family's survival, and, whenever possible, survival with *filotimo*, honour. To provide dowries for sisters and help for parents, men and boys left for the new land of riches.

The Intermountain Greeks began arriving when the opening of coal and metal mines and the clearing of sagebrush under homestead laws required railroad extensions that veined the West. With this rapid industrialization, a few adventurous Greeks left established Greek Towns in New York and Chicago, made pacts with mine and railroad management, trading the promise of cheap labour for privilege, and tenaciously became the leading labour suppliers of the West. Within a few years of the new century, Greeks flocked to mines, mills, smelters, railroad camps, and towns that dotted the arid expanses from Montana to New Mexico.

The immigrants lived in crowded Greek neighbourhoods made up of shanties, boardinghouses, coffeehouses, bakeries, and grocery stores selling imported olive oil, *feta* cheese, dried *bakhalaro* (codfish) and *octopi*, Turkish coffee, figs, liqueurs, and *loukoumi* sweets. The Towns were sanctuaries for the Greeks in an alien land that needed their labour but, fearing their inroads into American life, decried their 'racial inferiority' and their 'unassimilability'.² To them the immigrants travelled when hungry, when looking for work, and when, after clearing a plain of sagebrush in Idaho, they were routed out of their tents by masked men with guns and whips. To the nearest Greek Towns they fled when Americans rioted in Omaha and burned the Greek section of the city and when in Nevada they protested the untended injuries of one of their labour gang and penniless walked through more than two hundred miles of sage and salt desert.³ To them they flocked to blunt their exile in this *xenetia*,

2. See O. Handlin, *Race and Nationality in American Life* (New York, 1957), pp. 77-8; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), chaps. 8-11; H. P. Fairchild, *Greek Immigration to the United States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1911), was a leading proponent of nativist notions on the inferiority of Greeks.

3. T. Burgess, *Greeks in America* (Boston, 1913), pp. 165-7; T. Saloutos, *The Greeks in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 62, 66-9; J. G. Bitzes, 'The Anti-Greek Riot of 1909 - South Omaha,' *Nebraska*

this foreign land. Among their own people, singing and dancing in remembrance of their folk heroes, watching the *Karaghiozi* shadow puppets in coffeehouses where basil plants grew in rusty tin cans, eating their own foods, listening to scratchy Greek phonograph records and peripatetic musicians with *lyras*, *laoutos*, and clarinets, they were, without knowing it, already beginning to accommodate themselves to American life.

Later, when the first Greek picture brides began arriving, hardly any escaped running a boardinghouse or having their husbands' brothers and cousins living in their houses, while they raised large families, washed clothes by hand, baked bread in outside earth ovens, grew vegetables, and canned fruit. Working harder than they had in their villages where women in the extended families gave help and support, young wives coped alone with the demands of a patriarchal society transplanted to the new country. There were women among them, however, who welcomed the opportunity to make money for their families' security and competed, even feuded, for boarders. In Pocatello, Idaho, women filed court suits against each other charging pirating of boarders.⁴

Yet there were never enough women to provide board and room for the thousands of labourers coming into the country. There were also men who preferred to crowd together and cook for themselves to save money. These immigrants lived in tents and powder-box shacks outside which water for drinking and sewage streams ran side by side. A Cretan woman, who arrived in southern Colorado's mining district in 1911 and later lived in many Utah coal towns, recalled:

When the men brought me their clothes to wash on their way to work, I had them drop them by the fence, then I would lift them up with a long stick and drop them into a tub of water boiling over a fire in the yard - because they were crawling with lice.⁵

History, LI (1970), 199-224; Helen Zeese Papanikolas, *Toil and Rage in a New Land: The Greek Immigrants in Utah*, 2nd ed. rev., reprinted from *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1970); Louis Lingos autobiographical sketch, Greek Archives, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

4. Reminiscences of Emily and George Zeese, and Mrs. Nick Poulos.

5. Interview with Mrs. Pete Georgelas, 8 September 1974.

Management built boardinghouses over the years, but they were incommensurate with the need. The 1910 Dillingham reports of the Immigrant Commission said of company quarters provided by the mineral industry:

For 'white men' without families the company maintains a dormitory for which the charge for each man is \$1 per month. The service rendered includes the supply of bedding and laundering of bedding and towels. For the Greeks and the Japanese [the lowest paid workers] the company furnishes bunk houses with running water for the price charged 'white men' at the dormitory, but covers neither bedding and laundry. . . . The Greeks and Japanese are segregated from other employees. . . . The segregation is partly the result of the difference in the standard of comfort demanded by 'American' laborers . . . and partly by the habit—more or less imposed by the prejudices of 'American' laborers—these laborers have of living by themselves.⁶

Both management and Americans in general thought of immigrants as being content with a low standard of living. Wherever labour gangs were large, workers lived either in 'foreigners' camps' or in 'white men's camps'. The difference in amenities was most noticeable on railroad gangs: American quarters included a separate car for cooking, another for eating, and a third for bunk-bed sleeping; for immigrants one car was used for cooking and eating, with wooden platforms at each end for sleeping. This practice continued after immigrants took over the major industry of laying rails and keeping them in repair.⁷

Paradoxically, immigrants were castigated for their low standard of living over which they had little control and also for their frugality that led to accumulation of real estate properties and establishment of businesses. In the propaganda of the day,

6. *Reports of the Immigration Commission: Immigrants in Industries, Part 25: Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States*, Vol. III (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1911), p. 202.

7. This discrimination was practised in Mid-West labour gangs also. For a description of a Greek labour camp in Wisconsin, see W. M. Leiserson, *Adjusting Immigrants and Industry* (1924; reprinted ed., *New York Times*, 1969), pp. 71–2.

their low standard of living enabled them to save money that Americans with a higher one could not. A typical comment in a Nevada newspaper said:

The foreign element . . . spends no money other than for the barest necessities of life. They hoard their earnings, spending scarcely 10 per cent with the business men of the community . . . and send most of their savings out of the country. The native born workingman, on the other hand, spends his money for good living, good clothes and for the comforts of life. . . .⁸

During labour troubles newspaper reporting increased its hostility to Greeks and other immigrants for their unsanitary living conditions, ignoring management's irresponsibility of not providing adequate housing. The Western Federation of Miners and the American Federation of Labor railed, unheeded, at the degradation of all miners' living conditions, but the clearest voice was that of a Greek woman journalist. Maria Ekonomidou travelled the West and as far north as Alaska. She wrote, 'I will always remember the brave young Cretans and Roumeliots of Utah, Colorado, Wyoming, and Nevada', the greatest number of Greeks in the Intermountain West of the period. She rebuked the Greek government sponsored Panhellenic Unions for exhorting the Greek immigrants to remember the fatherland and to return to it while overlooking their illiteracy and appalling living conditions. She demanded of the Utah Copper Company general manager hospitals and housing for the immigrants. R. C. Gemmell answered her: 'They choose their own habitations and if we built them better ones, they would not live in them.'⁹

The men, with boys from nine to fourteen years of age as water boys, were constantly moving from one railroad gang to another replacing narrow-gauge rails with standard gauge,

8. V. R. Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike: Immigrant Labor in Pennsylvania Anthracite* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), pp. 118, 120, shows this widespread view at work in the anthracite strike of 1897. *White Pine Daily News* (Ely, Nevada), 28 October 1907.

9. Maria Sarantopoulou Ekonomidou, *Oi Έλληνες της Αμερικανικής όπως τους είδα* (New York, 1916), pp. 65, 85.

from mineral mines to coal mines, from mill towns to smelters – always in search of work and better pay. Although railroad roadmasters and mine foremen could at times be approached by immigrants seeking jobs for brothers, cousins, and countrymen, invariably workers had to obtain a note from a labour agent authorizing their employment on a railroad gang or in a mine. The note protected them from vagrancy charges that jailed hungry, anxious immigrants, a traumatic experience, the memory of which remained throughout their lives.

The despot who ruled the labour market and to whom almost every minor Greek agent gave fealty was Leonidas G. Skliris, called the 'Czar of the Greeks' by Americans. A native of Sparta, speaking a schooled Greek, Skliris arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1897, and established headquarters near the Denver and Rio Grande Western and Union Pacific railyards. He soon had branch offices in New York, Saint Paul, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, San Francisco, and Sacramento. His choice of Utah for headquarters was propitious.¹⁰ Not only were the largest copper deposits in the world and vast coalfields of a high carbon, low-sulphur bituminous with excellent coking qualities within its borders, but labour had to be imported. The Mormon people who settled Utah had continued their obedience to Brigham Young's orders to stay on the land and not be seduced by the 'sinks of pollution' that came with industrialization.¹¹ While frenetic activity was changing Utah from an agricultural to an industrial state, Mormons remained a rural people.

As the leading labour agent for the Denver and Rio Grande Western, Oregon Short Line, and Union Pacific railroads, their coal company subsidiaries in Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado, and for the Utah Copper Company (later Kennecott) interests in Utah, Skliris advertised in Greek newspapers in the United States, mainland Greece, and Crete, and brought thousands of Greeks to the West. Many came with *foustanellas* (white pleated kilts) in their baggage; far more came directly from Crete, entire

10. For additional details on Skliris, see Helen Z. Papanikolas, 'The Exiled Greeks', in Papanikolas, ed., *The Peoples of Utah* (Salt Lake City, 1976). An excellent survey of Greek labour agents in the West is found in L. J. Cononelos, 'Greek Immigrant Laborers in the Intermountain West: 1900–1920' (Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1978), chap. 5.

11. J. C. Alter, *Utah, the Storied Domain*, I (Chicago and New York, 1932), p. 379.

groups of them wearing black breeches with an amulet of Cretan earth sewed inside a square of cloth and pinned to their undershirts. In accordance with the traditional custom of paying for patronage, woven into life under the Byzantines, the conquering Franks, Venetians, and Turks, the young Greeks paid Skliris's lieutenants an initial payment of around twenty dollars. This bribe was a large amount for immigrants who had grown up during the last decade of the nineteenth century. Fleeing the debilitating effects of national bankruptcy and military defeat by the Turks, many of them arrived in the United States during the severe economic depression of 1907. Days of hunger – and work, when available, at fifty cents to a dollar a day – sent them wandering through the hamlets, towns, and cities of America.

Besides the initial payment to labour agents, a monthly dollar, and sometimes two, was exacted from each labourer in return for continued employment; this binding, unending relationship was even more bitterly resented by the immigrants than the paying of the first bribe. There was no escape from this extortion: a large network of men worked to enforce the *padrones'* rule, either fulltime employees or those who combined representing labour agents with owning clothing, grocery, or coal, ice, and feed stores. Minor Greek labour agents waited in coffeehouses on payday for the monthly fee, or had their wives sit on front porches while workers filed by and tossed silver dollars at their feet, but Skliris arranged with mine and railroad companies to deduct the money from the labourers' wages before they were paid.¹² This gave Skliris a grudging prestige in the eyes of the immigrants: he had greater *mesa*, the means of patronage. Bolstering his prestige was wealth. Skliris lived in luxury, occupying a wing of one floor of the newly built Hotel Utah. His extravagances were awesome for the day: to provide a night of entertainment, he brought Greek musicians from New York; and his gifts to mine managers were lavish.

Alongside Greeks riding the freight trains in search of Skliris were Serbians, Christian Albanians, and Lebanese. A document reveals that he and the editor of a Salt Lake City Italian-

12. A copy of Skliris's contract is filed in the American West Center, University of Utah.

language newspaper were also in business partnership.¹³ With his advertisements and agents making the rounds of coffeehouses in New York and in Chicago's Halsted district, Skliris made good his boast to mine and railroad officials that he could supply them with any number of workers at cheaper wages. During labour troubles, he assured them of strike-breakers. The promise of strike-breakers made Skliris of inestimable value to management, beset by the Western Federation of Miners, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the United Mine Workers. The twofold service of labour agents, providing workers and strike-breakers, was so important to management that elected officials, entrenched on the side of industrialists, ignored letters and petitions from Greeks charging extortion.¹⁴

Strikes and strike-breaking were foreign concepts to Greek immigrants. They had not travelled north for seasonal work in Central Europe and come in contact with radical labour views as had North Italians and Yugoslavs. It would take several years of labour indoctrination to teach Greeks that strikes were weapons. First they had to become accustomed to the audacity and the right of labourers to demand better working conditions and higher wages from an employer. All had known a demeaning dependency on the whims of employers and public officials. Yet it was as strike-breakers that the first Greeks in noticeable numbers came to the Intermountain West. Although a railroad gang from Louka in the Peloponnese worked on the Lucin cutoff of the Union Pacific, it was isolated and did not attract much attention. The first sizeable group of Greeks were brought as strike-breakers in a 1903 strike in the Utah coal fields where Italians, who had come into the area at the end of the previous century as strike-breakers, had become strikers as Greeks would in the future. These Greeks were brought directly from mountain villages near Lamia in Central Greece. A human

13. P. F. Notarianni, 'Italianita in Utah', in *Peoples of Utah*, p. 307.

14. Governor's Correspondence, State of Utah, 1911, contains two letters and a petition signed by more than 500 Greeks protesting Skliris's extortion. During the Pocatello, Idaho, railyard strike of 1911, the leading Greek labour agent in Idaho, William Karavelis, was accused by Greek workers of peonage (*Pocatello Tribune*, 3 December 1911); on 8 December, the newspaper reported the charges had been dropped and extolled Karavelis as a 'strong leader of the Greeks'.

element, now forgotten, worked to bring these Roumeliots to break the strike rather than Peloponnesians. Greek *padrones* showed preference for their own villagers and provincials before looking elsewhere.

Thereafter the Greeks came in ever increasing numbers, many straight from Greece as illegal contract workers; some by working westward after being turned away from factories and restaurants glutted with immigrant slave labour; others lured by advertisements in the *patridha*, by talk in village coffeehouses, and by proselytizing of steamship agents. The agencies for the French Line, Austro-American Line, the Italian La Veloce steamship companies and Skliris's labour agency were one and the same in Salt Lake's Greek Town. This combination of labour supplier and steamship agent was lucrative for the Czar of the Greeks. In addition, Skliris had partnerships in company stores where immigrants were forced to trade or lose their jobs. He had one saving grace the Greeks admired – courage. Leaving his hotel quarters to face the gun of a Cretan whose job had been terminated two months after he had paid for it, with a new Greek arrival taking his place – a common practice of *padrones* – Skliris deftly disarmed him.¹⁵

Living off the labour of fellow Greeks, Skliris showed little interest in them. He had the Old-World, and particularly the Near-Eastern, contempt for those who worked with their hands. He would not deign to grant an audience to a worker. 'We never saw him,' a Cretan said. 'We had to deal with his men. Many of us didn't know what he looked like.'¹⁶ The practice of charging immigrants a three-dollar head tax, dangerous working conditions, and crowded, unsanitary housing were of no concern to Skliris and other agents, nor were they to management, which opened one mine after another, indifferent to where the men would sleep and eat. Tent towns called 'Rag Towns' sprang up, and men continued to build shacks out of blasting powder boxes on company land.

15. A full-page advertisement in the Salt Lake City Greek newspaper 'Ο Εργάτης, 7 April 1908, gives the same address of Skliris's office for the steamship lines agency. The anecdote is well known and has been told to the author by many people, including Paul Borovilos, George Zeese, Louis Lingos, and Mike Lingos.

16. Louis Lingos interview, 3 November 1973.

Management, from straw bosses to superintendents, was as extortionate of immigrants as were labour agents. American workers were neither under the *padrone* system nor were they forced to pay bribes to bosses. A Greek, writing to the manager of a coal company, said:

As for a fact, I state that on the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th of this month, I have only filled up eight coal cars, and am working in water. The reason that I have only so few cars is that the driver is not furnishing me enough cars because I have nothing to bribe him with or give anything. . . .¹⁷

A Greek from Neohorion, Phthiotis province, wrote:

I got a job at the Armour's packing house in Omaha for 2 or 3 hours a day at 23 cents an hour. Out of this sum five of us had to live. Fortunately, I thought, a labor agent offered us a job on a railroad 800 miles away; paying him \$8 a piece for commission, which we borrowed, and on a freight train we reached our destination but there was NO JOB, neither were we allowed to return unless we paid the transportation charges back to Omaha.

We worked at some farm for 50 cents a day for 19 days and paid our way back to Omaha. From Omaha I went to Castle Gate, Utah, where I was offered a job at the coke ovens, provided I paid \$20 commission for the boss and his gang. When I reported to work, as agreed, the agent told me that someone else had bid the job with \$10 more and since I had no more money I lost the job plus the \$20 commission. . . . Then . . . I got me a job at the recently started coal mine at Kenilworth. The first month check was \$32.50. I got fired from there because not having any money to spare, I refused to contribute towards buying a diamond ring for the superintendent's wife. (We had to please and pay everyone to hold our job.)¹⁸

17. Letter in Greek, signed by John Stefanakis, dated 9 December 1920; translation by Ernest K. Pappas, notary public. In files of Utah Historical Society.

18. James Galanis autobiographical sketch, Greek Archives, University of Utah.

Exploited by their labour agents and by mine, mill, and railroad bosses, the immigrants had even less protection than that given American workers because their pay scale was lower. There were no unions and no workmen's compensation laws. Only the outcries of immigrants compelled companies to pay small sums for injuries and deaths when they were glaringly at fault. The loss of a leg or arm was worth about three hundred dollars after which the maimed immigrant returned to Greece to live in privation.¹⁹ Companies blamed the immigrants' ignorance of the English language for the high accident rate, but the printing of safety precautions in foreign languages had no effect. When money was to be sent to survivors in Greece, company officials often allowed the labour agent, the adversary of the immigrants, to handle the transaction. A Skliris labour agent embittered hundreds of Greeks because it was found that he had never sent the money entrusted to him.

The deaths of the young, Maria Ekonomidou wrote, 'nourished the Minotaur of immigrant life'.²⁰ Mine and immigrant inspectors' reports recorded a litany of human destruction. On their pages Greek names stand out with the cause of death listed tersely: from the force of blasting powder, the rip of machinery, the fall of a roof of coal, the tipping of a cauldron of boiling ore, and explosions in mines. In coal mines alone during the immigrant era of 1900-40, 1,748 men of all nationalities were killed in explosions in the Intermountain West, the greater number in the first twenty-five years.²¹ Falls of roofs of coal and ore were by far the most common cause of single deaths in mines.

Greeks learned quickly of death and maiming in western America. They feared being carried to company doctors and accused them of amputating limbs without adequate attempts to

19. Ibid. (The writer signed a paper absolving the company of responsibility for his broken nose and was given a silver dollar.) Interview with Zack Tallas, 17 January 1964, whose brother lost a leg in the Utah Copper Mine. James Zeese, a cousin of the author's father, experienced the same loss and subsequent payment.

20. Ekonomidou, op. cit. p. 20.

21. H. B. Humphrey, *Historical Summary of Coal Mine Explosions in the United States 1810-1958* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), pp. 17, 22, 38-41. This figure includes New Mexico where many immigrant Greeks worked.

save them. Secretly they brought injured *patriotes* to *praktikoi* (folkhealers) for cure. A legendary Greek midwife in Utah was consulted by Intermountain immigrant men to set bones and for folk remedies to cure a wide variety of illnesses.²²

Steeped in oral tradition, Greeks did not keep journals of their odyssey. There is one known exception. He began with his departure from Thebes in 1912. His mother, he wrote, 'kissed me, embraced me, and gave me a handkerchief to remember her by and inside was a five drachma coin and a sprig of basil'. A few days after leaving Castle Garden, he was working on the rails of the Saint Louis-San Francisco line with three track gangs: Greek, Mexican, and Arab. On the second day of work, his village friend injured his hand. 'I almost fainted', he wrote, 'because two fingers were hanging by the skin.' Several weeks later as the gang was moving rails from one section of the line to another, a railroad car fell on a young Corinthian and crushed him. Shaken, the Theban left for Roseburg, Oregon, to work on another track gang. He and two other Greeks, riding a handcar through a torrential evening rainstorm, did not hear a locomotive speeding toward them. Ten yards away it emerged. They jumped, a split second from death.²³

Regularly young Greeks were buried in Death Wedding funerals (*Thanatogamoi*); each lay in a casket dressed as a bridegroom, often with wedding crown on his head, with a gold band on his finger, and a sprig of white flower in his lapel – as Greek custom decreed for the unmarried dead.²⁴ Before the long walk to the graveyard on the outskirts of town, a final picture for village relatives was taken. Surrounding the open casket were men dressed in their black Sunday suits – and at times a woman or two; at the head of the casket stood an old-country priest wearing the tall black *kalimafkion*, bearded, his hair knotted in the back.

Until churches were built in surrounding states, a succession of these bearded, black-robed priests from the Salt Lake City

22. Helen Z. Papanikolas, 'Magerou: The Greek Midwife', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXVIII (1970), 50–60.

23. H. K. Kambouris, *Σελίδαι ἐκ τοῦ βίου μου καὶ διάφορα ποιήματά μου ἀναχώρησις διὰ Ἀμερικὴν καὶ ἡ διαμονή μου ἐν Ἀμερικῇ*, Greek Archives, Marriott Library, University of Utah.

24. A custom traced to antiquity. See J. C. Lawson, *Modern Greek Folklore and Ancient Greek Religion* (New York, 1964), pp. 545–62.

Holy Trinity Church travelled on railroad passes to industrial camps and towns in Wyoming, Montana, Nevada, Idaho, and Colorado to perform the liturgy for the dead.

After the obligatory picture-taking two men holding the Greek and American flags led the way to the graveyard, followed by six *patriotes*, the coffin resting on their shoulders, and then the Greek population of the area. Burial prayers were intoned at the open grave with someone among the immigrants who had helped a father or uncle in the altar of the homeland to swing the censer and chant the responses to the priest. The casket was lowered; each person present threw a handful of dirt onto it, and rocky earth was shovelled over. Into the mound a large black wooden cross was driven with the dead man's name in Greek painted in white across the arms.

Until women began coming to the Intermountain West, in numbers after 1912, the dead were buried without the keening of the *mirologhia* (words of fate). In an eastern Utah coal mine explosion of 1924 that killed 172 men, fifty of them Greek, gas and rubble hampered the rescue teams and ten days were required to bring up the dead. The widows' keening of the *mirologhia* came from the mine company houses throughout the ten days as one or two men were brought up at a time. A mass burial was held in a community hall because the Greek church could not hold all of the caskets.²⁵

Yet the young Greeks kept coming. It was the ancient poverty of their *patridha* that drove them westward. Workers in 1912 were receiving little more than one dollar a day in eastern factories, but men were making \$2.50 a day as muckers (diggers) and \$3.00 a day as miners in the copper mines of Utah and Nevada. To become a mucker and then a miner was the goal of Greeks whose starting wage was \$1.65 for a twelve-hour day.²⁶ The men took note of accidents and deaths by ascribing them to the fate, according to Greek folklore, allotted each man three days after birth.

Complicating the struggle to survive in the West were disputes

25. Papanikolas, *Toil and Rage in a New Land*, p. 177, photographs pp. 176, 178.

26. Dillingham report, Vol. III, p. 200. Greek workers in the smelting industries of the same period received \$1.75 per day: Bureau of Immigration, Labor and Statistics, *Report . . . 1911–1912*, p. 31.

that led Americans to stereotype the Greeks as wild, intractable people. In the face of American hostility, Greeks banded together in railroad cars and empty buildings to sustain each other during winter months when there was no work on railroads and in summer months when mine production slackened. They hid men from authorities during martial law at the risk of jail; twice in Utah they rushed to save a *patriotis* who was being dragged to a lynching.²⁷ Yet they also wrought chaos among themselves. Because the Greeks in the new country naturally continued their customs and cultural views, rooted in poverty, that judged a man's *filotimo*, men fought over slights to that honour. Life-long feuds sprang from marriage arrangements that went awry after the women reached America. Greek Towns divided into two enemy camps over the Royalist-Venizelos conflict, and lodge and Church politics increased dissensions in the new land. Elopements of mainland Greeks with Cretan women were accompanied by a justified fear of reprisal: the long-fought-for *enosis* – union of Crete with the mainland – did not include marriage for the fiercely chauvinistic Cretans.

A legendary quality quickly attached itself to feuds. A few hours after a Cretan killed a Skliris lieutenant and escaped from a mining town to make his way, eventually, to Crete, he was variously reported to have boarded a train posing as a doctor in Sunday suit and carrying a black bag, to have had his hair dyed red by accommodating prostitutes before leisurely leaving town, and to have hidden in the foothills for days.²⁸ These skirmishes were minor ones, however, compared with the labour wars that Greeks led in the first twenty-five years of the century.

27. Papanikolas, *Toil and Rage*, p. 155; Helen Zeese Papanikolas, 'The Greeks of Carbon County', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXII (1954), 153–4.

28. For an account of incidents in a coal mining community that have become folklore, see Helen Z. Papanikolas, 'Greek Folklore of Carbon County', in *Lore of Faith and Folly*, ed. T. E. Cheney (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1971), pp. 61–77. For newspaper accounts of the killing of labour agent George Demetrakopoulos see the *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 and 18 June 1908; *Eastern Utah Advocate* 18 and 25 June 1908. The 28 October 1908 issue of the *Eastern Utah Advocate* reported on a reward being offered by a Greek 'Black Hand' organization to murder two Greeks, one an interpreter who dictated the loss of a miner's job.

The initial role of Greeks as strike-breakers in the Intermountain West quickly metamorphosed into that of strikers. *Padrones* continued to recruit strike-breakers among unemployed Greeks with no industrial experience, but production suffered from inefficiency. Management fought to end strikes by branding workers as radicals, thereby obscuring their rights movement. Greek strikers, though, were not stirred by the crusading spirit of labour reform. Like other immigrant strikers, such as those involved in Pennsylvania's bitter anthracite strike of 1897, they worked under any kind of conditions as long as their pay was equal to that of fellow workers. They swung picks in poorly lighted underground tunnels, their feet in ice-encrusted water; they breathed black dust or the fine silt of ore that was ruining their lungs; and they timbered roofs and walls of mines too quickly because they were not paid for it. They accepted these circumstances as the necessary misery accompanying labour, believing their days of manual labour were temporary ones on the way to independence as respected businessmen.

Still, Greeks joined strikes and led them, even though they would lose wages committed to dowries and family mortgages and face the possibility of being blacklisted in mines throughout the area. Whenever they found that they were being paid less than Americans, or that they were being cheated on the weighing machines, or when they saw a chance for escape from paying bribes to *padrones*, the Greeks struck with a singlemindedness that astonished other workers and brought them abuse in newspapers and the contempt of Americans.²⁹

29. In the Utah copper strike of 1912, the Greeks were referred to in the 20 September issue of the *Deseret Evening News* as 'Cretan gunmen [who, with other immigrants] are dominant in a situation to which the "white" element has been forced against its will. Hundreds leave camp daily on every train . . . the two daily trains carry about 200 [a gross exaggeration] of the better element of the camp.'

During the Colorado coal strike of 1913–14, the *Trinidad* (Colorado) *Chronicle News* printed hearsay in every issue. The 13 November 1913 issue quoted a Greek as saying, 'The miners union is greater than the United States government and when the union gives the word to fire upon soldiers, we will obey the order.' The immigrants were stigmatized as anarchists. The 8 October 1914 *Denver Post* reported that the editor of *Il Risveglio*, a Denver Italian-language newspaper, wrote a letter of protest to the governor of Colorado objecting to a sheriff's remark that 'the Greeks and Italians were dangerous

Greeks participated in western shortlived strikes in the depression year of 1908, in 1909, and again in 1911 and 1912, in both mines and railyards. By the second decade of the century, many Greeks had left railroad gangs to become whackers in roundhouses, cleaning locomotives with caustic solutions. In the 1908 and 1911 Pocatello, Idaho, railyard strikes and again in the same area in 1922 (a strike that blacklisted Greeks and forced many to leave the state), the strikers were almost all from the Greek mainland. The unique characteristic of the big strikes in the coal and mineral mines in the Intermountain West, however, is that they were led by Cretans.

Greeks from Crete were ever ready to embroil themselves in labour strife, from small strikes such as the 1911 coal strike in Carbon County, Utah (the 'Greek War') in which two men were killed in an uprising of miners over being short-weighted at the scales, to the infamous Colorado strike of 1913-14 when seventy-two people were killed. The machine guns of management did not deter the Cretans.

Why were Cretans impatient to fight, more so than mainland Greeks? One reason is that Cretans remained longer in industrial work and had more years to experience labour abuses. They were also particularly resistant to the authority of mainlander labour agents and upheld and followed Cretan leaders as a point of honour. Greeks from the mainland early fulfilled their goal to satisfy family obligations, but the Balkan Wars and World War I interfered with their expected return to Greece. The establishment of families and communities replete with Greek churches, schools, and lodges and accommodation to American life with its myriad opportunities caused the brightness of the fatherland to recede.

anarchists'. The *Denver Post* of 30 October 1914 quoted the governor as saying the 'foreign element . . . had gone into the hills waving the red flag of anarchy . . .'. The *Trinidad Chronicle News* was hostile to the immigrants; the *Denver Post* often sympathetic.

An editorial in the 27 November 1907 *White Pine Daily News* of Ely, Nevada, said of the Greeks and Italians: 'Greed and grasp is all they know.'

The county newspapers reporting the Carbon County strike of 1922 were, except for the *Helper Times*, hostile to the Greeks. The 13 October *Price Sun* said ' . . . feeling is high in Spring Canyon with a bunch of red-blooded citizens out to clean up on disturbers'.

The Cretans, longer than any other Greeks, kept alive the idea of return to Greece and were wary of using their savings for American business ventures that would, they thought, be temporary. But most important, the Cretans were fresh from insurrections against the Turks. Although mainland Greeks sat in coffeehouses and boardinghouses and sang of eagles swooping up from battlefields with severed heads in their talons and of *klefts* waiting in mountain lairs to ambush Turks, these events were eighty years and more in the past for them. The Cretans, though, longer under Venetian rule, subjugated later by the Turks, had come to America directly from the revolts. Many of them brought, along with their amulet or vial of Cretan earth, photographs of themselves in *vraques*, cummerbunds, tasselled kerchiefs, bullet-studded bandoliers across their chests, and rifles, their 'lovely mistresses', at their sides.³⁰ There were men among them who had known Venizelos. They were contemporaries of Kazantzakis who had lived under, not merely heard of, crushing Turkish rule, who remembered the 'freakish half-mad' men and women of his neighbourhood and their 'fear of the Turks and their concern for their lives, honour, and possessions, which were in daily peril'.³¹ Like Kazantzakis, as boys many had been in massacres and seen the bodies of Cretans left swaying in the market place.

Added to poverty this instability of life sharpened Cretan honour to a fine sensitivity. They were of all Greeks quicker to avenge their *filotimo* and to perpetuate blood feuds – as Patrick Leigh Fermour has observed.³² Immigrants from the

30. From the famed Cretan guerrilla song:

Πότε θὰ κάνη ζαστεριά, πότε θὰ φλεβαρίση
νὰ πάρω τὸ ντουφέκι μου, τὴν ὁμορφὴ πατρώνα,
νὰ κατεβῶ στὸν Ὀμαλὸ στὴ στράτα τῶν μουσούρων
νὰ κάνω μάννες δίχως γυιὸς, γυναῖκες δίχως ἀντρες.

When will the sky clear, when will it be February
To take my rifle, my lovely mistress,
To come down to Amalo, on the road to Mousoure,
To make mothers sonless, and wives widows.

31. N. Kazantzakis, *Report to Greco*, trans. P. A. Bien (New York, 1965), p. 60.

32. Roumeli: *Adventures in Northern Greece* (New York, 1962), pp. 126-44. Greeks from the Mani, south of Sparta, as celebrated for its militancy as Crete,

mainland were more inclined to file slander and assault suits against each other; Cretans were more prone to settle insults to *filotimo* with guns.

Although mainland Greeks were working with Cretans in 1911, they did not join the Utah 'Greek War'. The Cretans followed a battle tactic used in this and later strikes: they climbed the slopes of arid mountains taking with them whatever guns, blankets, and food they had and established themselves behind boulders. There was nothing extraordinary to be seen on the slopes, only boulders, sagebrush clumps, and a few juniper trees. Throughout the night the fires of strikers burned on the mountains surrounding the mining camp. There was no other sign of life until American miners walked toward the mine entrance in early morning to begin the day shift. 'A rock several hundred feet above the settlement burst into a roar of pistol and rifle fire. Bullets spattered about the miners from every direction. . . .'³³ Heavily armed mine guards returned fire and waited for the Cretans to use up their bullets, food and water. The strikers held out miraculously; fellow Cretans from the twenty or more mining camps in nearby canyons were crossing the mountains at night and bringing supplies.

The same strategy was used in big strikes: the 1912 copper strike in Bingham Canyon, Utah, the Colorado coal strike of 1913-14, and the Carbon County, Utah, coal strike of 1922. The labour wars revealed intrigue, acts of heroism and cowardice, foolhardiness, self-serving, and *filotimo*.

The Greeks, almost all of them Cretans, working in the copper mines of Utah in 1912 had been indifferent to the proselytizing of the Western Federation of Miners.³⁴ As the populace at large looked upon the unionists as 'Bolsheviks', 'Wobblies', and 'labour agitators', Greeks went to and from

did not come to the Intermountain West. Only one is recalled by elderly Greeks, Louis Maniates, who was killed by a rival gambler in Reno, Nevada.

33. A. K. Powell, 'A History of Labor Union Activity in the Eastern Utah Coal Fields: 1900-1934' (Ph.D. Diss., University of Utah, 1976), p. 161. Pages 160-8 give a good picture of the relationship among Cretans, mainland Greeks, and Charles Soter, Skliris's representative.

34. Helen Z. Papanikolas, 'Life and Labor Among the Immigrants of Bingham Canyon', *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXXIII (1965), 289-315.

work with little interest in the then illegal, surreptitious campaign of labour leaders. Sitting in jail for idealistic future gains was incomprehensible to them and return to Crete was always in their thoughts. However, they soon saw the union as a means of removing their powerful labour agent Skliris. (They had attempted this three years earlier and, although not union members, had been supported by the Western Federation of Miners, who called Skliris the 'Greek slave driver and scab herder'. The Greeks had threatened Skliris after a Greek boy was killed by a mine guard for stealing coal during this minor strike.)³⁵

Making a pact with the federation, the Cretans agreed to join the union with the condition that the firing of Skliris be a demand in the coming strike. The Greeks were by far the greatest number of workers and the Western Federation enjoyed a phenomenal success; the two hundred and fifty members of July increased to nearly twenty-five hundred in October. When Union demands were refused, the Cretans jubilantly ran up and down the long winding street of the camp shooting off guns and terrorizing the community, an old country response to joy and danger.

Without notifying union officials of their plans, the Cretans took guns and blankets, climbed the mountainsides, fortified themselves in positions where they could see the entire narrow valley, and raked 'the mine workings with a hail of lead at every attempt of railroad employees or deputy sheriffs to enter the grounds'.³⁶ Union officials followed and tried to convince the Cretans to leave their strongholds, but as the *Salt Lake Herald Tribune* of 19 September 1912 said, the Cretans were 'famed as men who, when the spirit moves them to fight, are difficult to control'.

With deputies and national guardsmen at the foot of the slopes expecting the governor's command to charge and drive the Greeks down, it was discovered that sixty cases of dynamite were missing from a construction tunnel. The governor decided

35. V. H. Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Non Ferrous Metals Industry up to 1930* (New York, 1930), pp. 262-3. *The Bingham Press Bulletin*, 29 November 1909, upheld the mine guard saying, 'The deluge of foreign riff-raff is sweeping over us. . . . These outlaws should be taught their place.'

36. *Deseret Evening News*, 19 September 1912.

instead to give the strikers an ultimatum to return to work and waited in the town theatre to talk with them. The Cretans remained on the slopes until the Salt Lake City priest in black robes, swinging silver pectoral cross, and *kalimafkion* on his head, climbed the mountainside. He went, the *Salt Lake Tribune* of 20 September 1912 said, 'among the militant strikers like the spirit of peace and brought "the truce of God". Everywhere guns were laid aside and hats doffed in respectful salute.' The men marched down the slopes and to the theatre. Yet with two hundred and fifty heavily fortified deputies at his disposal, Governor William Spry did not attempt to disarm the Cretans. To Governor Spry's insistence that the men return to work, the Cretans shook the theatre with shouts that they would go back at the same pay scale if the Czar of the Greeks was removed as their labour agent. When the copper company officials denied that Greeks had to pay to keep their jobs and defended Skliris, the Cretans angrily left the theatre for their mountain barricades.

Strike-breakers began infiltrating the town, despite the vigilance of strikers. Skliris, through Greek labour agents in Colorado and Idaho, was recruiting unemployed Greeks throughout the West to break the strike. The men were mainland Greeks; the animosity engendered at that time between them and the Cretan strikers was kept alive through the years when Utah Cretans supported Premier Venizelos and almost all other Greek immigrants upheld King Constantine. The factional split is still apparent today.

Although mine officials continued to defend Skliris as an honest man who was paid a salary for his services, the charges of his being a *padrone* began to have an effect on the public even though it was opposed to unions and viewed strikes as un-American. To counteract this, Skliris offered five thousand dollars for proof he charged men for jobs, the money to be used to erect a monument to Governor Frank Stuenenberg of Idaho, killed by a bomb in 1905 during mine labour wars. The offer was immediately accepted by the secretary of the Greek church in Salt Lake City. Two days later Skliris resigned. The Cretans celebrated in coffeehouses before going back to the mountains.

The strike continued; two Greeks were killed, one lost his leg, others were seriously wounded. (A Greek was also killed in McGill, Nevada, where Utah Copper Company miners had also

gone out on strike.) Through freezing winter months the strikers suffered from lack of food and fuel. The Western Federation of Miners in Butte, Montana, sent \$7,000 in relief, three dollars a week for single men and six dollars a week for family men.

The strike was lost leaving deprivation among strikers and an enormous economic loss to businesses and copper production. Skliris attempted to survive as a labour agent at a distance, but he never attained his former power. All labour agents had a brief, flamboyant career, cut short by the restrictive immigration laws of the early 1920s that kept desperate young Greeks in the homeland. The leading labour agents of the Intermountain West died penniless. Men who worked for Skliris and other *padrones* as a sideline, however, were the first successful Greeks, the source of money used to buy businesses and property now nearly forgotten. Labour agents were extortionists and opportunists, yet performed a service for great numbers of uneducated immigrants, afraid, conditioned by custom to believe that favours had to be given in return for work, hampered in a strange country by inability to speak its language, who knew neither where work was nor how to go about getting it.

After the expulsion of Skliris, newly arrived Greeks went through a harrowing time of scrounging for work for themselves and their *patriotes*. The journal-keeping Theban wandered nine months through the Northwest, borrowing a few dollars from friends to follow every rumour of work. On the way to yet another fruitless journey, he wrote:

Day and night I walk a strange land and despair
I am not able to live anymore in these strange places
I beg you, God, accept my wish
Send the Archangel to take my soul.³⁷

In the last months of the Utah copper strike, a coal strike began in the southern Colorado mines owned by John D. Rockefeller, Jr.³⁸ Again Cretans became leaders and from them

37. Kambouris journal, pp. 132-3.

38. For accounts of the strike see H. D. Graham and T. R. Gurr, *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives* (Washington, D.C., 1969), pp. 254-6; *Colorado, Ludlow, Report of the Special Board* . . . (Denver, 1914); G. S.

came a heroic martyr. Louis Tikas had been born near Rethymnon, Crete, and had arrived in America in 1906. As a coffeehouse owner in Denver, Colorado, he was known for befriending countrymen needing shelter, or as someone to speak with American officials for them or to write letters to their villages. Greeks entrusted him with their wages as they moved from section gangs to mines and mills: new immigrants were reluctant to use American banks.³⁹ Tikas became an interpreter and then an organizer in the northern Colorado coal mines.

When the United Mine Workers called the strike on 23 September 1913, hundreds of miners were evicted from company houses. They loaded children, rickety furniture, straw bedding, and cooking utensils into wagons and with early snow falling made their way down the muddy roads of Delagua and Berwind canyons. Many miners pulled top-heavy carts. Eight to ten thousand miners followed into the tent towns put up by the union, the largest of which was Ludlow.

Labour leaders were faced with a large contingent of Greek miners, recently arrived from Crete, who could not understand English. Tikas was brought in to organize the Greeks and became their spokesman. A report to the governor of Colorado said:

The most forceful portion of the colonists were Greeks. We do not know that they outnumbered the other nationalities in the colony, but we are positive that they dominated it. The

McGovern and L. F. Guttridge, *The Great Coal Field War* (Boston, 1972); B. B. Beshoar, *Out of the Depths: The Story of John R. Lawson, A Labor Leader* (Denver, 1958).

39. Interviews conducted by Zeese Papanikolas with survivors of the strike and men who knew Tikas include: Mike Livoda, Denver, Colorado, 27 August 1973; John Tsanakatsis, Oak Creek, Colorado, 29 August 1973; Gus Papadakis, Oak Creek, Colorado, 29 August 1973, 24 July 1974, 1 August 1974, and Hania, Crete, 30 May 1975; Mike Lingos, Price, Utah, 23 July 1973; Mary T. O'Neal, Hollywood, California, 4 April 1974; Peter Loulos, Chicago, Illinois, 4 April 1974; Louis R. Dold, photographer, whose pictures of the strike are filed with the Colorado Historical Society, San Francisco, California, 27 July 1974, 17 August 1974, and 12 October 1974. All interviews are tape-recorded, except for that of Mike Livoda, and in the interviewer's possession. A tape-recorded interview of Livoda by Joseph Stipanovich, 20 June 1973, is on file at the American West Center, University of Utah.

will of the Greeks was the law of the colony. They were the most aggressive element, the fighting men. . . . Such was their position and authority that although many of the nations had leaders of their own, the Greek leader was the master of the tented city.⁴⁰

Clashes of militia and national guardsmen with strikers continued throughout the winter in the mining camps surrounding Trinidad, Colorado, killing guards, strikers, and children. The Cretans were acknowledged for their cunning. As some of them had come from the Balkan Wars, rumours spread that their strategy had been learned on the battlefield and that they had brought a good supply of Greek-made bullets.

On 20 April 1914, one day after Greek Easter (Julian Calendar), when Tikas and his Greeks barbecued lambs bought at neighbouring ranches, danced old native folk dances, several of the men in Cretan *vrakes*, the Colorado National Guard began its big offensive. The guard said later that the day was chosen because word had come that the Greeks were planning an attack as part of their celebration. Cretans maintained that the soldiers expected the Greeks to be dazed from drinking wine and unprepared for attack.

In the early morning, guardsmen fired on the Ludlow tent colony killing five men and a boy. The strikers ran to their stations and began firing across the road at the soldiers. In many of the tents holes had been dug and covered over with planks as hiding places for women and children during gunfire. Tikas tried throughout the day to lead shocked women and children to a deep, dry river bed for safety. By afternoon he was able to bring small groups to the *arroyo*, while the noise of strikers' bullets and the guard's machine guns increased and came closer.

The tents were set on fire; two women and eleven children hiding in the dugouts suffocated. Tikas saw the impossibility of getting all women and children to the river bed, raised a white cloth of truce, and approached a national guard officer who broke a rifle over his head. Tikas was pushed into the crossfire of strikers and guardsmen and fell, riddled with bullets, to become known as the 'Martyr of Ludlow'.

40. Ludlow, *Report of the Special Board* . . . , p. 7.

In a matter of hours, coffeehouses in the West heard of his murder and, whether they knew him or not, Cretans from Raton, New Mexico, forty miles away, walked over the mountains carrying rifles and ammunition, and Greeks from Colorado Springs slung flour sacks filled with ammunition over their shoulders, tied red bandana kerchiefs around their necks as a sign of revolt, and set out to avenge their countryman.⁴¹

Other Greeks, however, saw an opportunity for personal advantage in the disarray following Skliris's loss of authority in the copper strike. A Greek shoe repairman from Trinidad travelled to Bingham Canyon, Utah, and recruited strike-breakers from among the Cretan strikers, then blacklisted throughout the Intermountain mining towns. There was also a scramble among several Greeks at the death of Tikas to become the spokesman for their people. The shoe repairman had his shop hacked up by Cretan strikers, and a self-styled successor to Tikas did not have the charisma and altruism to be acclaimed by the Cretans.

Tikas was eulogized in newspapers and by people of the working class, his Greek village background supplanted by ancient Greek heritage: 'Who knows what blood flowed in his veins? Perhaps the blood of Pericles.'⁴² Tikas's name is at the top of a list engraved on a monument erected by the United Mine Workers in memory of those who died at Ludlow. On each anniversary of the attack he is recalled as the hero of the massacre. Yet a letter written by him, in the files of the United Mine Workers national headquarters in Washington, D.C., shows he had trouble with union officials who resented his leadership.⁴³

The few Greeks who joined unions for ideological reasons were unmarried and almost everyone of them remained so. They had been indoctrinated by men who were not Greek. A survivor of the Colorado strike of 1913-14, said, 'A Black working next to me converted me to the union. Only a few of us Greeks believed in the union from the beginning. The others joined when Tikas became the leader.'⁴⁴

41. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 April 1914.

42. *United Mine Workers Journal*, 28 May 1914.

43. Addressed to United Mine Workers officials, 10 February 1914.

44. Gus Papadakis interview.

The need of unions to have Greeks within their ranks for strength paralleled the need of industry for their cheap labour, but in neither unions nor work did the Greeks find full equality. Their difficulties increased during the World War I years when, still expecting to return to Greece, they were initially reluctant to serve in the American army. The anti-immigrant campaigns during the war years and those following with the American Legion leading a feverish drive to keep immigrants from the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Mediterranean out of the country were fuelled with increased propaganda against the millions of dollars sent back to their countries by the immigrants, their faltering in enlisting in the war, and their 'un-Americanism' in joining strikes. The increasing numbers of Greeks leaving labour to become businessmen were harassed.⁴⁵

When miners in the Intermountain West joined the national coal strike of 1922, outcries against immigrants reached an apogee. Again the focus of the strike was in the coal fields of eastern Utah. Again Cretans were leaders of the tent colonies and short-weighting on the coal scales the catalyst for their striking. The initial impetus for the strike was a cut in wages while coal prices remained steady. After ambushing a train rumoured to be carrying strike-breakers, miners were forced out of company houses and into the union's tent colonies. A confrontation in an orchard between a deputy sheriff and a Cretan named Tenas left the striker dead and his *patriotes* vociferously charging that he had been unarmed. The casket was escorted to the graveyard with two men at the head of the procession holding large Greek and American flags, followed by

45. Emily G. Balch, *Our Slavic Fellow Citizens* (New York, 1969), Appendix, p. 472, shows that Greeks led all other immigrants in remittances to their native countries. The methods used in harassments were: denying business licences; accusing men of having been 'strike agitators' and therefore un-American; in Carbon County, Utah, refusing American citizenship applications for five years to Greeks who balked at enlisting in WWI; and by openly resisting attempts of Greeks to establish themselves in business. This resistance began as soon as Greeks left the labour ranks to enter business. The *Great Falls (Mont.) Daily Tribune*, 9 April 1908, published accounts of mass meetings to 'consider ridding Great Falls of undesirables. . . . Greeks have located in this city and invested money in business blocks, restaurants and other small business enterprises. . . . The Resolution provided that a committee be appointed to confer with the Greeks and induce them to leave the city.' The *Standard* (Ogden, Utah), 9 April 1909, voiced similar feelings.

seven hundred Greeks carrying small blue and white Greek flags. A newspaper account accused the Greeks of dragging the American flag in the dust and Americans watching on the sidewalks said it had been set on fire. The Greeks denied the flag had been desecrated.⁴⁶

In a second ambush on a train entering the county, a sheriff was killed and an engineer injured. A badly wounded Cretan was captured by guards, then rescued by friends who carried him to a doctor. The guns in the strikers' belts convinced the doctor that it was expedient to give emergency treatment. The man's compatriots hid him in one remote town after another until he recovered. Searching for him, the national guard rampaged through Greek stores and boardinghouses.

Fourteen Cretans and an Italian were arrested for the death of the sheriff. After long, turbulent trials three were acquitted, the rest sentenced to terms up to life imprisonment. 'A vicious element', the 30 June 1922 issue of the *Sun* (Price, Utah) said of the Greeks, 'unfit for citizenship'. All Greeks were included: strikers, non-strikers, cardplayers, businessmen, and second-generation children. The Greek vice-consul, who several years previously as a Greek-language newspaper reporter in Salt Lake City had exposed a Greek posing as a banker and bilking Greek labourers of interest on their savings, was arrested when he tried to enter a mining town to speak with Cretan strikers. His diplomatic immunity was cavalierly disregarded by the national guard.

A rival county newspaper complained that of the three thousand Greeks in the area, only one hundred were married.⁴⁷ The presence of thousands of single Greek men in western towns had been alarming to the native population from their initial appearance. An official report on Ludlow said, 'The strange thing, and one that we found important is that there were no Greek women or children in the colony.'⁴⁸ In Utah and

46. *News Advocate* (Price, Utah), 18 May 1922. Almost a quarter century after the strike, men involved admitted to the author that Tenas armed himself in preparation for confronting the deputy whose car had broken down a mile from the Helper, Utah, tent colony and that a 'hot head' had set fire to the flag before others could restrain him. See Papanikolas, *Toil and Rage*, pp. 167-75 for an account of the strike.

47. *News Advocate*, 13 July 1922.

48. Ludlow, *Report of the Special Board* . . . , p. 7.

surrounding areas where Mormon influence was strong, northern-European converts most often came in family groups, giving a sense of stability.

Assault cases in which Greeks had taken revenge for disparagements on their origins were commonplace and fights between 'white men's camps' and 'foreigners' camps' were widely reported with Greeks accorded blame. In a McGill, Nevada, mêlée that killed three Greeks, eighty-seven compatriots were loaded into two boxcars and taken into a desert where they were forced out with neither food nor water.⁴⁹

Fears for the virtue of American girls were ever present. The Greeks would not confine themselves to their Greek Towns, and the well-dressed gamblers and 'interpreters' among them stigmatized their entire hard-working population. Americans imposed restrictions: in Pocatello, Idaho, Greeks were forced to sit in theatre balconies and in many western towns real estate clauses prohibited them from owning property in what were considered select neighbourhoods.⁵⁰

With a number of Greek men marrying Americans, establishing themselves in business, their 'unassimilability' judged by coffeehouses, Greek schools, Greek language newspapers, and their 'clannishness' in living near each other, the groundwork for the Ku Klux Klan attacks against immigrants in 1924 and 1925 was laid. Klansmen in hoods and robes marched down city and town streets, burned crosses, threatened Greek men who employed American women and stormed through their establishments. In a Utah mill town hooded Klansmen entered a store owned by a young Greek

49. *White Pine News* (Ely, Nev.), 2 June 1908.

50. The author's parents and other Greeks in Pocatello, Idaho, would not attend theatres because of this restriction. In the mill town of Magna, Utah, the owner of the company store built himself a house on prime land he owned, but was forced to mortgage it to the Greek owners of the Central Lumber and Hardware Company as collateral for building materials needed to finish the structure. A subsequent reading of the abstract revealed that Greeks were not allowed to buy land on his property. Mary P. Lines recalls her father Gust Pappas appearing before the Price, Utah, city council to plead the case of a fellow Greek, a World War I American army veteran, who had earlier been denied the right to purchase city land. 'You see this man's dark face, but the scar on it came from fighting for this glorious country.' Similar stories are part of the immigrant experience of almost every first-generation Greek the author has interviewed.

engaged to an American and read him the Klan articles of incorporation, adding one which refused Greeks the right to marry American women. The man and woman eloped and returned to find crosses burning in front of his store and another in the yard of his wife's parents.⁵¹

Nine years after the solidarity of immigrants subdued the Klan, in the depths of the Great Depression, another national coal strike paralysed coal production. This time Cretans were not leaders. By then, they had wives and children and Greek responsibility to the family took precedence over earlier, freer behaviour. There were also fewer of them in the Intermountain West. Like the mainlanders, they had not returned to the homeland as they had intended. A few took their savings in the depressed thirties and left for Crete, but most were fearful to return in the economic uncertainty of the times.

The population of Greeks in the area dwindled and was not replenished because of immigration restriction. With their savings Greeks settled elsewhere, some to become prosperous. Once-active churches are either closed, like that in McGill, Nevada, or are little more than chapels: Great Falls, Montana, and Pueblo, Colorado. A good number of the immigrants never married; inured to a wholly male life, they existed on the fringes of Greek life, living in run-down hotels, their final days spent in coffeehouses, which decreased in number as the men died off.⁵² They remind one of Cavafy's lines:

. . . By heavy labour there outworn
He was destroyed by suffering and cheap debauchery⁵³

The interplay of the industrialization of the Intermountain West and the lives of Greek immigrants is seen to be symbiotic: immigrants provided the brawn for mines, railroads, mills, and smelters while industry in turn provided wages with which the immigrants established themselves in America. The

51. Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Dallas, 26 June 1972.

52. A study on the last of coffeehouse habitués is J. Patterson's 'The Unassimilated Greeks of Denver', *Anthropological Quarterly*, XLIII (1970), 248-58.

53. C. P. Cavafy, 'Days of 1909, 1910, and 1911', *The Poems of C. P. Cavafy*, trans., John Mavrogordato (London, 1952), p. 140.

participation of Greeks in the early twentieth century labour wars contributed to the breakdown of resistance to unionization that led to the Wagner Act of 1933. This participation added an additional burden to the discrimination experienced by second-generation Greek ethnics.

Like millions of other hardy immigrants, the Greeks persevered. The greater number lived through the hard days of early immigrant life, married, had children, became store owners, sheepmen, and cattlemen, and moved out of the Greek Towns in the prosperity of the middle twenties. A rustic people, they saw the promise of America vested in their children, who finished grammar schools, high schools, many going on to colleges and universities and often to graduate schools, with their Greek ethnicity engrained in them. Their grandchildren are as American as any third generation immigrant people, but highly conscious of their Greek roots. In the final assessment the industrial American West, with its early horrors in living and in dying, did give to thousands of immigrant Greeks a foothold in American life.

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